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Nathan Watson whips out a fat one at our myth bustin' test

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Wild card Tommy Searle remains to be the man to beat in t'Maxxis

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# COMMENT

**T**hey – whoever they actually are – reckon they can figure out if you're an optimistic or pessimistic person depending on whether you think the glass is half full or half empty. That's all well and good but let's ask the same question in motocross terms – if there are only 20 riders on the start line at a grand prix is the gate half full or is it half empty?

In my noggin it doesn't matter which way your mind bends that answer – 20 riders lining up for any world championship round is totally and utterly sh\*t! Does saying that make me a pessimistic or possibly even negative person? Yeah, maybe it does but I'm not too worried about it.

What I am worried about is the state of the world championship. There used to be a time when 100-odd riders would turn up to a GP to try and qualify for a space on the line in Sunday afternoon's races but now they can't even half fill the line. The question is why does nobody wanna race the world championship anymore?

The answer is that they really don't have to. With the opportunity to make a living racing the various national championships there are around Europe the bulk of professional motocross riders who aren't gonna earn the big bucks from a team competing in the world championship can still make a living.

And that's great news for us as it means that instead of staying in to watch that sh\*tty web quality Youthstream coverage on Motors TV we

can travel down the motorway and watch some pretty badass racing – like we had at Landrake and Foxhill – firsthand instead.

That's not to say I won't be lining the fences when the GP circus comes to Matterley in August or that I'll stop being interested in who's doing what in the world championship. I'm just pointing out that you can see top riders from the UK and Europe battling out right here in Blighty on a regular basis and that's really cool.

At the moment I have something other than the state of GP motocross on my mind and that's because in the next month or so my good friend Mr Knowles up at Kendal hospital is gonna open up my knee and completely replace the knackered joint inside with something made of metal and plastic. Although I'm pretty excited to get something that pivots properly and doesn't limit my ability to move I'm actually gonna miss that old chunk of bone – we've been together for quite a long time.

My girlfriend asked me what my top five favourite memories were the other night and much to her disappointment they were all motocross related and all probably played a part in my leg joint's demise. Like with anything in life you have to take the rough with the smooth and part of the price we pay for taking part in such a badass sport are the aches and pains but would we want it any different? I doubt it.

Until next month ride safe and enjoy the mag...

*Sully*

The Romaniacs was one event that took its toll



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Although both Ken Roczen and Ryan Villopoto could have sealed the deal in SLC only RV2 left with a title

# MacNEWS UND!

IRN BRY'S TAKE ON THIS MONTH'S TOP STORIES  
FROM ALL AROUND THE OFF-ROAD WORLD...

Let me start by saluting Sir Ryan Villopoto. RV further cemented his #BOSS status by winning his third consecutive AMA SX championship on the bounce when he wrapped up the title a week early in Salt Lake City. There's not much more that can be said about the guy that hasn't been said about him before so let's all just silently nod our head in approval and appreciation for the man's radical skills and radical ginger beard.

On the other hand though what about Kenny Roczen making a total James Hunt of his quest for the West coast SX title. He nearly had it all but sewn up when he entered SLC with a 20 point lead over Tomac. He was the fastest guy in the class all day in practice while Tomac struggled – only

placing as high as the back end of the top 10.

It was looking likely that Roczen could well have taken the title a round early too but after a couple of crashes during his heat race Roczen just pulled up and then eventually out of the race two laps from the end to "save energy". He went to the LCQ and subsequently got taken out in the first turn by a bunch of guys which resulted in a DNQ!

If only he had finished his heat race regardless then his gate pick for the LCQ would have been better and likely of been on the inside of all that carnage in the first turn. The moral of the story – don't be a pussy and finish your motos kids!

Be sure to catch Hangtown this month too as the first round of the AMA

outdoor nationals kicks off. The start of a new season with new players, new goals but most importantly a new found confidence for everyone as it levels the playing field once again. One of the biggest questions about this season though will be somewhat answered at round one as the most hyped amateur ever should be gracing the start line with his presence – I'm on about Adam Cianciarulo. Pro Circuit need a saviour right now after a dismal supercross season but the will the most manually sculpted rider of all time be that guy?

Early May is seeing the first ever electric motocross race. The FIM are holding a race for a category which they are calling E-MX – like the already existing MX1 and MX2 etc – in Zolder, Belgium. It's exclusively for the KTM

Freeride E which isn't for sale yet so it's more like a demonstration race for chosen participants such as Stefan Everts, Jake Nicholls, Ken De Dycker and some Belgian Olympic BMX gold medallist.

It is however following a similar format to a GP with free practices, qualifying sessions but with the addition of a semi-final and finishing with a final consisting of six qualifiers – so a line up about the same as in MX1 then. It's not been said whether this is just a novelty one off race or a test for something in the future.

On the home front this month is the tragic news of a bike heist that took place in the wee hours at the third round of the GT Cup series at Brookthorpe in Gloucestershire. >>





# MAC211

## FICKLE FRIEND!

BILLY CAN'T QUITE MAKE UP HIS MIND IF HE LIKES SUPERPOLE OR NOT...

Words by Billy MacKenzie Photo by Shayne Rice

**O**ld form is creeping back slowly and we're making steady progress. Two rounds of the championship are done and I have two podiums to look back and reflect on as I focus on the next three rounds in the Australian championship. I still feel like I'm racing at 90 per cent. I haven't quite found that mojo or flow on my race bike that I would like and I feel there is a lot more in the tank for when the time is right!

I'm having really good solid weeks on my trusty steed at home – her name is Bonnie... I liked her enough to name her! So midweek sessions are a blast and I even cruised up the Sunshine Coast to race a smaller national series at Hervey Bay where we will have a round of the nationals later in the year. I had a race win by 10 seconds over Todd Waters in the final moto and it was one of those races where I felt 100 per cent. I know I can do it so when I can't find that flow at the Nationals it becomes frustrating. I know it's not far away though!

So the first round was a bit messy and for those of you keeping track on the Aussie series you will know there has been a new points scoring system introduced for Superpole. If you finish in the top five in qualifying you are awarded points – five for first down to one for fifth. I finished second at round one so got four points.

I then had a terrible first race with a bad start and a bike that was way too fast to race! I struggled round to a ninth place finish which was super embarrassing. Luckily Josh Coppins was there to offer his very valued opinion so after a very short discussion Josh made some important bike related calls and we lined up for race two.

I got another sh\*t start but the bike was a lot smoother and I was able to pick off a bunch of riders in front of me to finish second. It was a tough race coming through the pack and getting filled in but that's motocross! My 9-2 result with the bonus points for second in the Superpole elevated me to third overall on the day.

Superpole was my friend on this occasion.

Round two was at Murray Bridge – a track I had won the overall at convincingly in 2011. It is a sandy loamy track with similar dirt to Desertmartin but without as much elevation change. I was feeling confident and made some bike changes again searching for a little more power but again it was the wrong direction! I struggled around in qualifying thinking I'm killing my laps only to be shown a ninth place finish! When have I ever been this far down in qualifying I pondered? I missed Superpole and missed out on some very valuable points. Back at the truck we put the bike back to the way it was and made a pact never to change it again!

First race I get another really bad start – I've never been this bad at starting either! I had to come through the pack again, getting filled in every single lap and using all 21 laminates. I pulled through from a midpack start to finish second again but wasn't happy with my ride. I was within striking distance of Jake Moss and didn't pull the pin and I had to ask myself why?

In the second race I finally got a good start and came out of the corner third. I quickly made my way into second behind Todd Waters and we stretched out a lead over the pack. Again I was within striking distance but couldn't quite find my flow. I was making silly little mistakes – overshooting corners and missing ruts. I just felt a bit loose and didn't want to throw away valuable points so brought it home in second for another podium spot.

So the race results for me were a 2-2 against Waters' 5-1 but by winning Superpole he gained an extra five points and snatched the overall from me by two points! Superpole wasn't my friend on this occasion.

So we're closing up on round three and I'm starting to look for that overall win. Working on my starts and maybe taking a few more chances should get me there – oh and make sure I win Superpole!



Ned Parker noodled his knee at Landrake

These guys must have been professional ninjas as they managed to get away with five bikes, tools and equipment undetected before the weekend action had even started. A proper travesty to these families that lost their bikes and possessions and we wish them all the best of luck in recovering their things.

There was some other scandal in the pits recently too as the Revo Talon Kawasaki squad – which was newly formed for 2013 – split up for reasons that are unbeknown to me. The team fell apart right down the middle I'm told and now one half of the old team is still on-going under the unsurprising title of Talon Kawasaki. They retained the services of their big gun Nez Parker but unfortunately in the team's debut – of sorts – at the first round of the Red Bull Pro Nationals Ned suffered a fate that has plagued him numerous times before and he blew out the ligaments in his knee – unlucky dude. Undeterred by the loss of their bionic man, Talon Kawasaki are determined to stick around and are going to be fielding strong replacements in the form of Yentel Martens of Belgium and an American based rider for selected rounds in the UK.

Have any of you guys heard of a bright British prospect called Billy King? Well this young Team Green Kawasaki shredder is an absolute badass! While riding at Rocketworld recently I watched this kid riding a big wheel 85 show established pros how to hit freestyle kickers. They were nervously getting a tow from Billy to judge their speed to jump the gap which he was hucking all day long.

Then if that wasn't impressive enough a video popped up on the Rocket World Henstridge Motocross Track Facebook page of this young renegade pulling off a massive double – about 110 feet – on his 85. Right wrist on lock and upshifting on the take-off it's an impressive piece of footage of this young ripper – go check it out.

And from one brand-new star to an old one... How about Nunny turning up at the Maxxis British championship round at Lyng and laying wood to three quarters of the pack. Carl finished seventh overall and considering that he retired a few years ago this is a true testament to the former British champion's raw natural talent and experience of which he shares through his training schools. You can find out more about them at [www.carlnunn.co.uk](http://www.carlnunn.co.uk).



Carl Nunn – living legend!





# WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN!

## EXCLUSIVE THOR/VOLCOM SIGNED SWAG AND DVDS UP FOR GRABS...

**T**HOR athletes are killing it on both sides of the Atlantic right now with Ryan Villopoto taking his third straight AMA Supercross title while Gautier Paulin finally put a stop to Antonio Cairoli's win-streak in the MX1 GPs. To celebrate both great victories we've hooked up with our great mates at FreestyleXtreme who've then hooked us up with our mutually great mates at Madison – in a totally non-gross like that Human Centipede film type of way – to offer each and every DBR reader the chance to win an outstanding prize package.

First prize is a signed – by Gautier Paulin – hat and t-shirt, a Ryan Villopoto 2 Be Continued DVD and a set of THOR Volcom racewear. One runner-up will snag a similarly signed hat and t-shirt as well as that DVD while the next five correct

entries eased out of our bulging sack will all win a DVD n'all. That's seven winners in total. Rad, huh?

To be in with a chance of being one of our lucky seven we want to know what Gautier Paulin's race number of choice is.

Is it: **A:** 21  
**B:** 25  
**C:** 27  
**D:** 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea

If you reckon you know the answer then log on to our website – [www.dirtbikerider.com](http://www.dirtbikerider.com) – and then follow the competitions link in **dirtZone**. The first correct answers drawn randomly after the closing date of **June 7** will win the prizes. Woop woop!



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# YAKETY YAK

## HOMECOMING QUEEN!

AFTER NAILING A GP PODIUM IN HOLLAND JAKE POPS BACK TO BLIGHTY FOR A RACE OR TWO...

Words by Jake Nicholls Photo by Suttly

**H**i everyone hope you're all good. I'm sure like me you are happy that the weather has defrosted and is warming up...

First of all I didn't get to mention in my last column about my podium in Valkenswaard. Words can't describe what a cool feeling that was. I'm in my sixth year of GPs and it feels like a long time ago that I was struggling to qualify but everything just clicked for me at Valkenswaard.

I feel like I have been riding well all season but I just haven't been able to put it all together and it was nice to do it so close to where I live in and it really made the sacrifice of living in Belgium worthwhile after so many days spent slogging it out at the sand tracks and getting my arse whopped by the locals. It's safe to say that everyone involved with my racing was over the moon including my dad who was absolutely blattered and put on a fine display on how to speak drunken Dutch at the frituur that night. Thanks mum and dad because I couldn't have got close to that result without you.

After the excitement of that weekend I had a weekend off so we packed up the truck and cruised back home which was really nice as I hadn't been home since the start of the season and it meant I could ride my track and squeeze in a cheeky race at Lyng. I couldn't miss the opportunity as it is one of my favourite tracks in the world and I have missed racing there for the last two years. I would just like to thank Stebbings Cars for organising my trip over and to my mechanic for sacrificing his weekend off to let me play in the sand there.

It was nice to race at a British championship again even though in the past I have made it clear that I am not a fan of the 20 minute races and I still stand strongly by that opinion. But never the less I enjoyed the event, the track was brilliant and the organisation was spot on.

The day after Lyng we left back to Belgium as much as I didn't want to leave the joys of home. That Thursday we set off on our maiden voyage in our new camper tackling the 1100km drive to Italy with my mum and dad in tow, calling me every five minutes to tell me to slow down in the mountain passes. My dad stained his pants about four times going through Austria as well as getting stung for not having an Austrian toll pass.

I felt really good in Italy and really enjoyed the track. I had a fourth in the first race and lined myself up for a podium in the second race but had a mechanical failure, therefore DNFing the race and being pretty pissed off.

The following weekend in Bulgaria wasn't a good one either. I can take a lot of positives from the weekend but the results were below par due to crashes in each race. The first race crash was not my fault but the two crashes in the second race being entirely my fault through a lack of patience while passing.

My championship hopes are pretty much ablaze – obviously Herlings is proving unbeatable at the minute – but from here on out my plan is to go race by race and to really try and bang in some good results as I feel

like I'm riding the best I ever have. I just feel like I need to stay on the bike and get some good starts and I will be there.

This last weekend I was supposed to ride in Holland for the third round of the Dutch championship but there was some complication between the federation and my team so my team gave me the option of having the weekend off which I grabbed with both hands and booked a train to come home there and then.

The older I get the more I realise I am a real home boy and I love coming back to sunny Suffolk to hang out with my mates and ride dirt bikes. As always it's a pleasure to ride bicycles on our country lanes as I'm already sick of the Belgium canals and it's only just May.

I've got to be honest I don't really enjoy living in Belgium that much anymore. I really appreciate what it has done for my riding though and I still feel like I am getting a lot out of riding the tracks here but I just don't really feel we have much of a life here and I feel like I can never get away from racing. I'm quite a closed person at times and I really like my own space, I'm pretty fortunate to have Blu and our dog Jeff with me the whole time. I realise that I have only got a short window to make money out of motocross and if it means that I have to live here for that period of time then so be it but I'll still take every opportunity to get back home to England.

This last weekend was supposed to be my weekend off but it was the first race of the year at Blaxhall Pits – the closest race track to home and one of my favourites. I couldn't resist riding but I thought of doing something different instead of riding my practice bike.

All of my mates have bought 125 two-strokes recently and the Woodbridge club have included a two-stroke open class in their events so I asked a mate who has gone on holiday if I could borrow his KTM 125 and next thing you know I was on the line next to 39 other two-smokers on a bone-stock bike with only the sag set and the filter cleaned.

It was one of the most fun days on bike I've had this year and it was a good challenge too as I let the pack have a two corner headstart and then charged my way through in the 15 minutes given to try to win. I came up short by about three seconds in the first race – behind Steve Bixby who was on a 250 – but the other two races I managed to get out in front after screaming the tits off poor Adam's bike – cheers Ad.

I took Derk the Merc for his first run out at a MX meeting too, rigged up with trailer in tow I got some funny looks from some of the locals. I guess they were expecting a decaled up van and a tricked up 125. It was a good day out – the sun was on show and the track was in perfect condition. Thanks to John Blyth and the Woodbridge club.

Finally, I just want to say a big get well soon to Ollie Stern who broke his leg in the last race – you'll be back on the horse before you know it. Thanks for reading and I'll hopefully see you at the races soon.

*J. Nicholls*



That's the end of that then...

## CANCELADO!

APPARENTLY THE MEXICANS MEXICAN'T...

**I**f you've booked flights to Mexico for the eighth round of the MX world championship on May 26 then get a refund quick because it ain't

'appening – el grande prix es cancelado.

Although Youthstream haven't said exactly what's up the word on the street is that the organisers have failed to produce enough Pesos to meet the exorbitant fee that the world championship promoters demand. Whatever the reason it's no great loss to the series as Guadalajara wasn't a great track, facility or city. Giuseppe and the gang are already on the look out for a new Mexican promoter for 2014 and beyond. Nice.



Bobby in happier times at Valkenswaard

## BOBBY OUT!

THE CURSE OF DBR STRIKES DOWN ANOTHER VICTIM...

**S**traight after scoring the cover of May's issue of DBR Evgeny Bobryshev spammed his leg and hasn't been seen on the track since.

Catching his foot during a pre-Italian GP training session, the 25-year-old Russian fractured his fibula and missed both Arco di Trento and Sevlievo rounds of the series. Bobby currently sits 10th in the series standings and will be back in action at Portugal for round six unlike April cover star Steven Frossard who'll still be sidelined until the French GP. Oopies!

## ITALIAN JOB!

DISASTROUS DOUBLE DNQ FOR MAGEE'S MAIN MEN...

**H**M Plant KTM UK team boss Roger Magee had little to worry about come race day at the Italian GP – other than catching his flight home on time – as both his riders failed to make the 108 per cent cut in Saturday's pre qualifying practice. While Elliott Banks-Browne had a midweek practice crash and a back and shoulder injury to blame for his lack of speed around the Arco di Trento circuit young gun James Dunn just failed to gel with the track.

Surprisingly the pair were in good company as both of Monster Energy Yamaha's factory MX1 pilots failed to miss the cut n'all. Frenchman Steven Frossard was still feeling the after effects of foot surgery while Joel Roelants crashed hard in the timed session and was left feeling dazed. This meant only 26 riders lined up for the start of moto one on Sunday in the premier class while the MX2 class had just 32 starters – we're not exactly experiencing golden times in GP motocross right now...





Paulin stomps Cairoli's MX1 win streak out in Seville

# QUELLE SURPRISE!

HERLINGS KEEPS HIS CLEAN SWEEP ALIVE BUT PAULIN PUTS AN END TO CAIROLI'S MX1 WIN STREAK...

Photos by Sarah Gutierrez

**W**ith maximum points and a 65 point lead in the championship after just five rounds it's gonna take something special to stop Jeffrey Herlings from winning his second MX2 world title on the bounce. If the Dutch teenager keeps on edging away from the pack at the rate he is he'll be crowned in the first moto at Loket – with three and a half GPs left to run! Crazy.

After Romain Febvre broke a bone in his leg it's been up to Herling's KTM factory team-mate Jordi Tixier to be his closest challenger and the Frenchman has run 2-4-2-2 through this month's motos in Arco di Trento and Seville to edge clear of third placed Glenn Coldenhoff. In turn, the Hoff's got a small advantage over Jose Butron and Christophe Charlier – the last man other than Ken Roczen to better the Dutchie over the course of a season.

Max Anstie is best of the Brits in sixth – his best score this month is a fourth in moto two at Bulgaria. The ginger ninja is nine points shy of the Charlier but 13 clear of Monster Energy Yamaha's Dean Ferris who's seventh. Jake Nicholls suffers a mechanical in Italy second time out after a fine first moto fourth and then runs 6-14 in Bulgaria after crashing in both races.

It's also a disappointing month for HM Plant KTM UK. Elliott Banks-Browne suffers after injuring himself before Italy and is a non-starter while James Dunn fails to make the 108% cut off. In Bulgaria things are

slightly better for EBB as he manages to score a solitary point but Dunn continues to struggle for pace although he does make the championship motos this time around.

It's a more upbeat month for EMX250 champ Mel Pocock who continues to run a solid top-10 pace despite claiming to have concentration lapses in the closing laps. A 10-13-11 run of results is soured by a technical problem in Bulgaria's second moto after he snatches the holeshot – Mel's running fifth until his bike loses all power and eventually quits. Bah!

In MX1 the big news is Cairoli's first race fourth at Seville – his worst moto finish since last year's Brazilian mudfest! That blip aside – one that also costs him the overall in Bulgaria to Gautier Paulin – it's another flawless month for the six-time world champion who now sits on a 40 point lead in the championship ahead of the aforementioned Frenchman who fires in a 2-4 in Italy and a podium-topping 1-2 in Seville.

Clement Desalle – red plate holder after round one – now holds third in the standings after getting leapfrogged by the on form Paulin. The Belgian Suzuki star has a steady run of results – 3-8 in Italy and 3-3 in Bulgaria. He'll need to up his pace if he wants to stay in a medal-winning position though as Belgian beanpole Ken de Dycker is right up his compatriot's tailpipe – just six points behind.

British MX1 champ Kevin Strijbos is currently fifth in points – just 13 ahead

of this year's Maxxis pace-setter Tommy Searle. After a disappointing Valkenswaard Tommy Gun fires out a pretty pleasing 5-6-5-8 run of results. He's definitely finding his feet in MX1 and is headed to happy hunting grounds next – he won motos last year in both Agueda and Beto Carrero.

Shaun Simpson still sits 16th in the fo-fiddy class standings after a steady month on the factory TM. A 9-14 at the team's home GP in Arco di Trento leads on to a 12-12 at the superfast Seville circuit. With a gaggle of racers just in front of him it's entirely feasible we could see Woody knocking on the backdoor of the top 10 in our next update! Go on sir!

T'other Brit in MX1 – that's MVR-D's Jason Dougan – continues to acquit himself well – scoring points in three of this month's four motos. The highlight is a second moto 16th in Italy backed up by a pair of 18ths in Seville. Portugal and Brazil are up next...

## SERIES STANDINGS

### MX1

1	Tony Cairoli	235
2	Gautier Paulin	195
3	Clement Desalle	189
4	Ken de Dycker	183
5	Kevin Strijbos	160

### MX2

1	Jeffrey Herlings	250
2	Jordi Tixier	185
3	Glenn Coldenhoff	157
4	Jose Butron	143
5	Christophe Charlier	137



## THE STAND-IN!

CLS KAWASAKI SIGN JIMMY D...

**W**ith Arnaud Tonus sidelined for an undisclosed amount of time, CLS Kawasaki team owner Jean-Jacques Luisetti has announced he's signed 21-year-old American Jimmy Decotis to fill in for the rest of the year. Jimmy D has been one of the USA's leading privateers in recent times and is often championed by Brotocross webmaster Eli Moore who must have loved the fact they managed to spell his name wrong on a press release.

Things didn't get much better for Decotis as he failed to score points at his first two GPs for the team but we can definitely expect better from the New Englander as he settles in to his new surroundings. "The team are doing everything they can so it's all down to me," says Jimmy D. "I don't know yet what I'm doing wrong but I will keep on working and working. We now have one weekend off from racing and I will work together with the team to improve my results – that's what it's all about."

## FEBVRE FRUSTRATED!

FLYING FRENCHMAN SIDELINED BEFORE ROUND FOUR...

**B**ig surprise in the MX2 division this year has been young Frenchie Romain Febvre who joined Jake Nicholls on the Wilvo Nestaan JM Racing KTM team and then promptly ran rings around everyone other than class supremo Jeffrey Herlings. After Valkenswaard the 20-year-old held third in the series – even after failing to score in the Dutch round's opening moto – but then broke his fibula in a midweek training accident. Romain required surgery to fix the break and is now expected to be sidelined until the Italian GP at Maggiora in mid-June. The good news is the team have extended his contract so he gets another shot in 2014.





**Nathan Watson puts the power to the ground**



Tommy goes 2-1-1 to take the MX1 class overall

EBB extends his series lead



## SERIES STANDINGS

### MX1

1	Tommy Searle	146
2	Tanel Leok	124
3	Kristian Whitley	98
4	Nico Aubin	89
5	Jonathan Barragan	84

### MX2

1	Elliott Banks-Browne	134
2	Nathan Watson	103
3	Steven Lenoir	101
4	Neville Bradshaw	94
5	Graeme Irwin	90

# WILD BOYS!

**WILD CARDS JAKE NICHOLLS AND TOMMY SEARLE REIGN SUPREME AS THE BRITISH**

**A**fter a soggy start at FatCat and the complete cancellation of round two at Canada Heights the Maxxis series finally gets a break with the weather as the third round goes off under blue skies at Lyng in Norfolk. Wild card riders dominate on the day with Tommy Searle taking the MX1 overall with a 2-1-1 scorecard while Jake Nicholls takes maximum points in MX2.

Joining Searle on the podium are eastern Europeans Tanel Leok and Matiss Karro. The Estonian runs 1-2-2 while Karro goes a steady 3-3-3 on his return to the series following injury. STR team-mate Jon Barragan has a very disappointing and even fails to finish the third moto as he complains of blurred vision.

In the chase for the championship Tommy holds down a 22 point lead over Leok although isn't likely to contest any further rounds of this year's series (although we said this last month and he made us look like liars) which makes Leok the virtual points leader. Closest competitor to the Estonian in the series

standings is MBO Yamaha's Kristian Whitley – who finishes sixth overall in Norfolk. K-What's currently already more than a full moto back in points but is headed to happy hunting grounds next – Milton Park and Foxhill.

Despite getting beat by Jake on the day, Elliott Banks-Browne stretches out his lead in the MX2 championship with a solid 3-2-2 scorecard on the HM Plant KTM. The two GP runners are joined on the podium by Nathan Watson who goes 2-3-5 on the day which is enough to put him second in the series standings n'all. Watson's strong performance surprises many, including the ACU, who strip down his bike to make sure he's not running an oversize engine – which he's not.

In the championship chase the defending champ now has a 31 point advantage over Watson who in turn has a slender lead over Steven Lenoir, Neville Bradshaw and Graeme Irwin. How that changes as the series swings by the hardpack venues of Milton Park and Foxhill remains to be seen but it's sure to add an exciting twist to the middle part of the season.



© Mitterbauer H.

# KTM CALLBACK!

**READ THIS OR WEEP...**

**I**f you own a 2013 model two-stroke KTM chances are you've already had a letter from KTM UK explaining that your bike's been recalled on the grounds of safety. Apparently a supplier production fault means that they're replacing the upper part of the throttle grip housing on all affected models. These are 2013 model year 85 SX, 125 SX, 150 SX, 250 SX, 125 EXC,

200 EXC, 250 EXC, 300 EXC machines. 2012 and '13 model year two-stroke Husabergs are also affected by the recall. If you're worried that you're bike might be affected but you've not been written to give your local authorised KTM dealer a call quoting the last six digits of your VIN (Vehicle Identification Number). KTM UK recommend that you don't use the bike until it's checked.





# WHAT SAY YOU?

TWO TICKS WITH TY KELLETT...

Interview and photo by Mark Turner

**W**e catch up with videographer Ty Kellett in our brand-new 'What say you?' feature to find out what he thinks about stuff and that...

**DBR:** What do you think about the start of Tommy Searle's MX1 career?

**TK:** "Tommy's rides so far on the 450 have been pretty consistent and I think with more bike time he'll adapt much more to the bike. I'd say that this year could be seen as a learning curve for him but in 2014 we should see him up inside the top three."

**DBR:** Evgeny Bobryshev has been forced out by injury once again just as it seemed he was in a position to challenge for wins. Do you think he could have challenged Cairoli this year?

**TK:** "Bobby's a cool guy who just doesn't seem to get the luck but saying that I didn't see him in the position to challenge Tony for wins but he would have been there or there about. Cairoli's just on another level at the moment."

**DBR:** Moving down to MX2... Can Herlings go unbeaten all year?

**TK:** "I'm a big Herlings fan and for sure it would be cool to see but it's a long season and of late he has had to battle his way to the front. So, maybe it's little too early to be thinking about him going unbeaten but if he does it then that would be something special."

**DBR:** As a viewer are the GPs getting boring?

**TK:** "For me I think MX1 is. Cairoli is just replicating Everts and going more or less unchallenged which is never going to make for good viewing. It's different in MX2 the way Herlings is having to come through the pack and having to race the likes of Nicholls and Tixier is edge of the sofa stuff for me so MX2 wins hands down at our place."

**DBR:** What do you think about the Pro Nationals going off on Weston-super-Mare beach front?

**TK:** "That's just the best idea ever and it's gonna be a mental weekend as long as they get the track design right. I'm sure it will be a huge success."

**DBR:** Over in the States, Marvin Musquin finally seems to have found some winning form...

**TK:** "I'm happy for Marv. Everyone thought he was going to go over and show the Americans how we Europeans ride but initially it wasn't to be. I remember Carmichael saying during a commentary once that it takes three years for European riders to adapt to the 'USA way' and it seems he might have been right."

**DBR:** With James Stewart out again with injury do you see the Bubba era to be at an end?

**TK:** "To be honest I don't know because I've always thought he was slightly better outdoors. The best thing he can do is call Mitch Payton and get him to hook him back up with a 125 two-stroke – that would be awesome!"



# IRN-BRY

## EDUCATING LEE!

IRN BRY TAKES A YOUNG PROTÉGÉ UNDER HIS WING AND TEACHES HIM SOME VALUABLE LIFE LESSONS...

Words by Bryan MacKenzie Photo by Suttty

**I**n April we saw the start of a motocross marathon. In the schedule from now until the first week in October I have penned in 22 weekends of championship racing in 24 weeks. As much as that means a lot of fun with time on the bike it also means even more time sat in the driving seat!

As much as I love living in the motherland, staying in Scotland means that we're close to nowhere. The nearest race for us this season – aside from the Scottish Nationals of course – are rounds of the British Masters and RBPB which are being held at Whitby. That's three and a half hours drive on a good run.

The nearest Maxxis for us this year was FatCat, Doncaster – four and a half hours. The furthest race for us in any season is undoubtedly Landrake – nine hours drive – which was the first round of the RBPB last month and was backed up by a British Masters at Foxhill the following weekend.

Logistically it's a nightmare and so the logical thing to do was to stay away from home for the week living in the race truck like gypsies. And so we wandered onto an unclaimed patch of real estate just outside of the MX Zone headquarters not far from Foxhill.

In our wee family for the week was myself, BC, Ross, Deano and the team's big-wheel 85 rider Lee. It was an experience for us all but none more so than for Lee – a 14-year-old kid who is very well looked after at home by his lovely mother. He's a mega little dude and you can't help but like the wee bugger but although he does well in school his common sense is questionable at times.

Only the other week, referring to the three.co.uk advert with the moonwalking pony he asked us how we thought they managed to get a pony to moonwalk like that and when we told him they lost three ponies trying to get that shot when it moonwalks right next to the cliff edge he was taken aback. Jackass!

So it was a baptism of fire into the real world for Lee learning valuable lessons for life that school just doesn't set you up for. We weren't teaching him the square root of anything, how to make a pine book-end or even the differences in using there, their or they're but we did give him priceless real life lessons in such things like hygiene, finances, self preservation and he even sampled a trade in the form of plumbing when he emptied the toilet – twice!

First thing on the agenda for the week was to clean up from Landrake and Lee learned the art of motor care and valeting as he helped wash the outside and clean the inside of the truck. He was a wee bit lazy at this one and must have thought this was a council job as he sat back and watched while two others mostly did the work. For his effort and commitment to this I'd have to score him a C in this life lesson.

Secondly, but still under the same category somewhat, was cleaning of his clothes and kit. We were shown the way to the local laundrette – which was a new experience for everyone – but just the concept of a washing machine was completely new to young Lee.

He'd never seen one of these fancy clothes cleaning devices before and never knew how to drive one. Normally at home he'd step out of his clothes and leave them in a pile on the floor like he had just melted out of them and then they'd magically fold themselves and jump back into his drawers. But not anymore! Lee passed his laundry exam with flying colours – but not literally. A+!

Thirdly came a little financial advice when wanting to blast virtually his complete £100 shopping budget on the first day on a £95 pair of shades. We got through to him that that just wasn't a smart move for survival and he should seriously consider thinking ahead a little in life, if even only as far as the end of the week, if he wanted to stay alive. He seemed to take that advice on board as he still seemed to be well stocked in microwave pizzas come Friday. B+ for his ability to understand reason and prioritise his finances, albeit on sh'te food – it was still spent on a necessity!

And while we're on the topic of survival and possibly the greatest lesson Lee could have taken away from his week in the big, bad world was how to make the right choice when faced with a hostile situation with an aggressive alpha-male. Late on in the week our attention turned towards the dartboard that was hung up in the MX Zone workshop to pass the long hours that BC and Deano were prepping the bikes in readiness for the Foxhill.

Naturally before long it turned into a competition and wagers started going on things like – first man to hit the bullseye, playing around the clock etc. It was all fun and games and a bit of playful banter but Lee was getting swept up in the intensity of gambling and couldn't wait to have his turn.

At one point though BC was needing five minutes to change a tyre on the tyre changing machine which was right in the 'danger zone' of the dartboard. Amped up and unable to wait though, Lee threw the first dart only for it to deflect off the board wounding BC so it was sticking out of his arm like something from Ace Ventura. BC went tits and it resembled something out of a Bear Grylls survival episode as if Lee had accidentally shot a sleeping bear with a BB gun – the differences in scale are quite accurate here.

At first a naive Lee stood his ground hitting back with a few verbals of his own before realising it really could have been the end for him if he didn't make himself scarce. By bowing out of that cock-fight meant living to fight another day and that alone warrants an A in survival.

So every day was a school day for that kid and I feel we really hit home some the fundamentals for life with a bit of finances, cleanliness and even how to make decisions in life threatening situations. The only thing we never really touched on too much was chicks but I think Sky channel 903 takes care of that...

*[Handwritten signature and "#121"]*





## JONTY'S BOX

### HOMEWARD BOUND!

AFTER A SOUTH AMERICAN START TO THE ENDURO WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP EUROPE'S WHERE IT'S AT FOR THE REST OF THE YEAR!

Words and photo by Jonty Edmunds

**W**ind any sporting clock back a few years and things will have been very different 'back in the day'. You name the game and it'll have changed in some way in the past five-to-10 years. From F1 to the Olympics, the Premier League to World Tiddlywinks Championships – the way things are done today will be different to how they were done not that long ago...

I'm not talking about the fact that the good old interweb has transformed the way we connect with/enjoy/follow/comment on said sporting events or how we're now able to get to them quicker and more easily. I'm talking about the fact that the world has shrunk. Seemingly every motorsport world series on the planet has spread its wings and set sail for pastures new.

In a few weeks the Enduro World Championship returns to Europe. The European Enduro Championship has now started – in Europe of course – as has every other major enduro series in Europe. Even X Games is heading to Europe soon. With South America having been the world's enduro focus at the start of the season, Europe's where it's at now... and for the rest of the year n' all.

It seems strange to be waxing lyrical about the fact that the EWC is 'coming back to Europe'. For so long a Europe only championship, having spread its wings and embraced new countries it's only now that it's viewed as a true world championship.

From now until the end of the year, enduro well and truly lands in Europe. Some events, like the International Six Days Enduro will run as they have for decades, others embracing our diverse continent for the very first time. No matter what the event, championship or tournament the focus is now firmly on Europe!

But what does the future hold? Where will the majority of EWC events take place in, say, 10 years time? The ISDE seems unsure if it should keep the 'two in Europe, one outside of Europe' event ratio its used for a good while now while the ESPN X Games tour seems to think Europe is a great home for half of its planned 2013 events.

It goes without saying that the European Enduro Championship won't be going anywhere anytime soon but it's a possibility that the world championship could soon become a 50/50 series with as many races outside of Europe (most likely in South America) as there will be in Europe.

As Moto GP follows F1, as MXGP follows Moto GP, and as the EWC seemingly follows MXGP who knows, we might even have international enduro races in Asia before too long. If, or when, that does happen the EWC will have turned a very profound corner – entries will likely drop to World Rally Championship levels with only a handful of 'factory riders' entered into each event from the bigger manufacturers.

That might be the best thing that could ever happen to the European Enduro Championship. The more affordable, more achievable series for the majority of European based enduro riders it could make serious headway towards becoming a much more widely recognised and credited championship.

As always time will tell all, and until we do know I guess we should simply enjoy enduro's 'summer of sport' – the return of the EWC, the remainder of the EEC, the welcoming of X Games to Spain and Germany and not forgetting the ISDE in Sardinia...

*Jonty*

# STRENGTH, MATE!

TWO TOP AUSSIES SIDELINED WITH SIMILAR SPINAL INJURIES...

Injuries are an unfortunate part of our sport and when professional athletes get seriously injured it sends shockwaves through the enduro community. But when two of Australia's top riders Toby Price and Mitch Harper suffered serious spinal injuries within the space of a couple of days the news was devastating.

First to hit the deck was Price. After flying out to California to continue with testing for the upcoming Baja 250 desert race, Price made a one-off appearance at a round of the AMA National Hare and Hound championship. Unfortunately midway through the race Price hit a hidden boulder and crashed heavily breaking three bones in his neck.

Immediately rushed to hospital, Price faced an agonising wait for surgery as insurance complications followed. Luckily, with conditions improving and Price showing full movement of his limbs he was later flown back to Australia and is expected to make a long but full recovery.

Meanwhile in Sweden, Harper was also injured. The Honda rider, who currently sits 10th overall in the Enduro Junior World Championship, crashed while testing with his MPE Johansson team. Following a successful surgery to stabilise some vertebrae Harper too has full movement of limbs but like Price faces a long recovery process.



### THE REAWAKENING!

AFTER A SIX WEEK SLUMBER THE EWC'S ALMOST READY TO ROCK...

**A**fter a lengthy six-week hiatus since rounds one and two in South America the Enduro World Championship resumes with back-to-back rounds of the Spanish and Portuguese GP's in May. The GP of Spain in Puerto Lumbreras kicks the action off on May 11/12 the series then moves on to Torres Vedras in Portugal the following weekend. With only seven rounds in the 2013 championship the upcoming GP's will prove crucial in determining the potential outcome of the rest of the season. Although still only May, the 2013 EWC series is on the home stretch after Portugal.

With four wins from four starts in South America it's KTM's Antoine Meo that holds the upper hand in the Enduro 1 class. Now a surprising 22 points clear of Husqvarna's Juha Salminen, Meo will be keen to keep his momentum high in Spain and Portugal.

Honda's Alex Salvini became the most talked about subject following South America and with a 10 point lead in the Enduro 2 class he heads to Spain as the rider everyone will be trying to beat. Catching the main E2 protagonists – Pela Renet (Husaberg), Johnny Aubert (KTM), Ivan Cervantes (KTM) and David Knight (Honda) – napping in Chile and Argentina the Italian is hungry to add a couple more victories to his 2013 season.

Secretly guarding an injury entering the season opener in Chile, KTM's Christophe Nambotin looked a shadow of his former dominant self. But despite his numerous crashes, mistakes and mechanical issues the defending E3 champ still managed to pick up two races win and position himself at the head of the class. But with Husaberg's Joakim Ljunggren only sitting three points behind him and Aigar Leok (TM) a further seven points adrift in third the E3 class is far from becoming a one-horse race just yet.



Taddy's just too damn good  
at this Endurocross stuff



## TADDY'S GOLD!

BLAZUSIAK CLAIMS X GAMES WIN IN BRAZIL...

**E**ven if you put Taddy Blazusiak on a rally bike for five days in the Abu Dhabi desert you can't stop him winning endurocross. Yeah, no matter what hurdles are thrown in his path Blazusiak is without doubt the greatest endurocross rider of all time. And his win at the first stop of the X-Games global tour in Brazil is testament to it.

Deciding to contest the opening round of the FIM Cross Country Rallies in Abu Dhabi just days before the biggest championship of his season the KTM rider then hopped on a plane and flew 25 hours to Foz de Iguaçu in Brazil arriving just in time for Enduro X. Despite a shaky qualification where the

Pole only placed fifth he came out fighting in the 10-lap final.

Wrestling his KTM 350 EXC around the incredibly slippery and greasy open air endurocross track Blazusiak held off numerous attacks from a determined Cody Webb to take the gold medal. Looking fast and furious on his two stroke Beta, Webb seemed to have the measure of a cautious Blazusiak until his lack of self-preservation finally got the better of him. Hitting the deck once too many Webb lost touch with the KTM rider and ended up finishing the race as runner-up.

Behind the leading duo, David Knight claimed the bronze medal. Although hoping to prove more of a

challenge to the leaders Knight spent the race riding through the pain of an injured wrist. Unwilling to risk a fall in the unpredictable conditions the Manxman wisely rode for a safe third position.

In the Women's class it was Spain's Laia Sanz that left the Yanks trailing in her wake. Despite never competing in endurocross prior to Brazil the EWC champ quickly showed her rivals how to ride logs and rocks. Getting boxed out off the start, the Gas Gas rider then passed the entire field on the opening lap to take an early lead. With her feet glued to the pegs Sanz ripped her way around the tricky course to claim victory at the end of the sixth lap.

## SPRINT START!

BOLTER AND SEISTOLA LEAD THE WAY AT BSEC OPENER

**T**he 2013 Husqvarna British Sprint Enduro Championship is well underway following a successful round one and two in Chavenage Farm in Tetbury. Perfect weather conditions ensured optimum course conditions for the 130-plus competitors entered. And with two different overall winners the season opener was certainly an exciting one.

In the Elite class it was KTM's Daryl Bolter that topped the standings at the end of round one. After a steady start to his morning Bolter gradually upped his pace as the day progressed once he'd settled into the cross-country styled course. Working his way into third overall with just the eighth and final special test remaining, Bolter got the better of a slowing Tom Sagar (KTM) before capitalising on a mechanical problem from race leader Matti Seistola (Husqvarna) to secure the win.

Although leading the way until the end of the fourth lap, Sagar began to suffer with a bad bout of food poisoning and slipped back to finish as runner-up to Bolter. Looking assured of the win Seistola too had problems of his own when his bike stopped midway through the final run. With the Finn left stranded, Husaberg's Jamie McCanney benefited from Seistola's misfortune to claim third place.

At round two, Seistola began his day in a determined mood and immediately set the fastest time on the first special test to take an early lead. It was one he wouldn't relinquish and despite McCanney bagging tests four and five the Husqvarna rider couldn't be caught and claimed his first win of the season. McCanney – who was clearly enjoying his debut ride on the Husaberg TE250 – ended round two as the runner-up to Seistola. Bolter capped off a successful weekend to take third overall.

The BSEC continues with round three at Saints Well in Wales on May 26.

© Steve Cox



## IRON MAN!

JARVIS SET TO CONQUER HIS ERZBERG DEMON

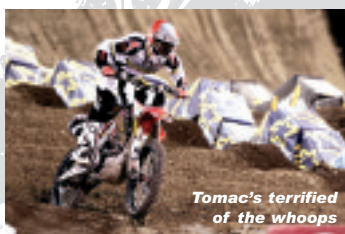
**T**he countdown is already on to the most important weekend in the Austrian off-road calendar. On May 30-June 2 the Iron Giant in Austria comes alive to the sound of 1800 crazed hard enduro riders for four full days of non-stop action where anything can and seemingly will happen. Pulling out all the stops event organisers will host two days of qualifying prologue runs, the Rocket Ride hill climbs, jet ski and FMX freestyle shows plus the real reason why everyone shows up – Austria's largest beer tent. To cap off the festivities there's also something called the Red Bull Hare Scramble – the mother of all hard enduro events. And this year things are shaping up nicely to ensure it will be one of the best yet.

KTM's Jonny Walker enters the event as the defending champion. The 23-year blitzed his way around the Iron Giant in 2012 to secure the win. But the question on everyone's lips is whether Graham Jarvis can finally win it? The

Husaberg rider has won every other race on the hard enduro calendar but this one. And although he's managed to cross the finish line first for the past two years he's been excluded on some seriously dodgy technicalities. Will 2013 be the year he finally gets his hand on the winner's trophy or is he gonna settle for being the most unsuccessful rider of all time at Erzberg?

Along with some of the best hard enduro riders in the world who are signed up to compete alongside Jarvis and Walker – including the Hemingway brothers, Dougie Lampkin, Paul Bolton and Geoff Walker (laff) – there are rumours that David Knight and Taddy Blazusiak are expected to make a start at Erzberg. Knight, a two-time winner of the race who spectacularly crashed out of last year's race shares something in common with Jarvis. He too is hoping to topple KTM's dominance of the event. Can he beat Jarvis to it or will Blazusiak come back and have the last laugh?





Tomac's terrified of the whoops

# FEAR FACTOR!

IS ELI TOMAC AFRAID OF THE BIG BAD WHOOPS?

**Y**es he is. This is a fact and you can see it. But why? Word in the pits is that the GEICO Honda team is struggling quite a bit with suspension/chassis settings. Their bikes work really well everywhere on the track except for the whoops and the bigger/steeper the whoops are the worse it is. They're all struggling with it.

In Salt Lake City, with a "get out of jail free card" on the line, if Eli Tomac could've won the main event he'd have gone into Las Vegas with a five-point lead. Instead, he struggled – in the whoops only – on his way to sixth place so he trails Roczen by five.

The crazy thing is that he's actually genuinely happy that he's in the fight for the title in Vegas and that the track map doesn't have a lot of whoops...



RV is champ!

# WINNER'S CIRCLE!

BY TAKING THREE ON THE TROT RV JOINS AN ELITE GROUP...

**I**n winning his third-consecutive AMA supercross championship at Salt Lake City Ryan Villopoto joined an elite group of racers that includes Bob Hannah, Jeremy McGrath and Ricky Carmichael. Those are the only other racers who have won three supercross championships in a row. McGrath won four in a row (1993-1996) and three in a row (1998-2000). In addition, it's Villopoto's seventh AMA National championship which ties him for third on the all-time list with Jeff Ward and Ricky Johnson. The only two ahead of him now are Jeremy McGrath (eight in total) and Ricky Carmichael (15).

They say quitters never prosper – but can Kenny regroup in Vegas?



# K-ROC'S CALAMITY!

ROCZEN'S SLIP UP BLOWS TITLE CHASE WIDE OPEN...

**K**en Roczen went into the Salt Lake City supercross with the 250cc West title in his grasp. He was 20 points ahead of defending champ Eli Tomac and if he won Salt Lake and Roczen finished third or worse then Roczen would've clinched the title with a round to spare. But in his heat race Roczen went down in the first turn, then fell a second time in the whoops when he collided with another rider. He could've kept going – and maybe even qualified – but he pulled out of the heat race and decided he'd go to the LCQ instead, apparently figuring that he could easily best the guys in that race.

However, gate pick is determined by your finishing position in your heat so he started on the far outside. He tried for the holeshot on the very short start straight and the ensuing – and

inevitable – pileup gathered him up. He rode valiantly in the four-lap race but could only manage third place – and only the top two went to the main. Luckily for him, Tomac had a very off-night but hopefully Roczen learned a lesson – even 10th place in his heat would have probably resulted in him making the main event through the LCQ because he would've had a much better gate pick. Never give up. The Red Bull KTM team may lose both of its 250cc racers in 2014. Why? Success. As the rules are currently written, 250cc Supercross Champions may race in the class for a maximum of three years. If a racer wins in their third year then they must move up without an opportunity to defend their title.

Roczen raced most of the season in 2011 before he left to go take down the FIM MX2 world championship so if he

pulls off this title he must race the 450cc class indoors from here on out. And Musquin? This is where this rule gets complicated, and the AMA doesn't know what they're going to rule on him. If he pulls off the 250cc East title technically he has only raced SX full time in 2012 and 2013. He missed what should've been his first season in supercross with an injury. But way back in 2007 Musquin raced Anaheim 1 and made the main event at that race. He was credited with a DNS on his Bud Racing Kawasaki so he scored no points, but the AMA is trying to decide if that should count toward his three years of racing. By the letter of the rule, it should but not by the spirit of the rule.

As for Roczen, rumour has it that his 2014 KTM contract has him on a 450 – or at least in the 450cc class – regardless of what happens in Vegas.

# SERIES STANDINGS

## 450SX

1	Ryan Villopoto	346
2	Davi Millsaps	318
3	Ryan Dungey	315
4	Justin Barcia	261
5	Chad Reed	224

## 250SX WEST

1	Ken Roczen	163
2	Eli Tomac	153
3	Cole Seely	135
4	Jason Anderson	124
5	Martin Davalos	114

## 250SX EAST

1	Wil Hahn	178
2	Marvin Musquin	173
3	Blake Wharton	153
4	Vince Friese	103
5	Dean Wilson	87



# STEWART SIDELINED!

OFFICER JAMES SITTING OUT UNTIL HANGTOWN...

James Stewart has hit the dirt quite a few times during this supercross season but in Minneapolis a heat-race crash tossed him into the dirt pretty awkwardly and he injured his hand/wrist bad enough that just a simple over jump in the main event saw him forced to pull out of the race. He decided at that point to sit out the remainder of the series and focus on outdoors. Remember, he's the only racer besides Ricky Carmichael to win every single moto in an outdoor season. And also remember that in 2012, when he first switched to the Suzuki he's racing now he won the first four motos of the season before a big crash at round three set him back. He can ride outdoors. The biggest difference in 2013 is he's going to have to deal with Ryan Villopoto who was hurt in 2012.

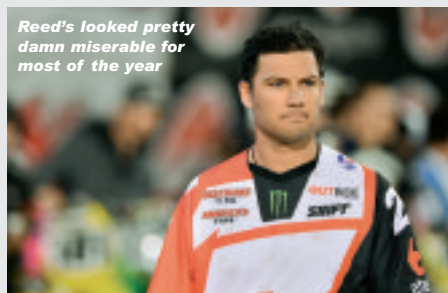


Stewart's had enough of getting blitzed indoors

# STUFFED!

THE PC RACE TEAM IS PRETTY MUCH PACKED OUT PEOPLE...

The Monster Energy/Pro Circuit Kawasaki team is fielding seven racers outdoors. Yes, seven. They're bringing out a new semi for their 450cc racers – Dean Wilson and Tyla Rattray – and then in the 250cc class they have defending champ Blake Baggett (who is reportedly healthy enough to compete), Darryn Durham, Justin Hill, Martin Davalos, and newcomer Adam Cianciarulo. As for Cianciarulo some doubters still believe he's too small/light to race in the pros but those people probably don't know that Blake Baggett won the title in 2012 at a weight of 129 pounds. Cianciarulo is the same weight. He'll be fine.



Reed's looked pretty damn miserable for most of the year

# ELBOW BLOW!

CHAD REED GETS A STINGER IN SEATTLE...

Chad Reed went down in the first turn in Seattle and had to drop out of the race, favoring his right arm. But he was back a week later in Salt Lake City. "I think I got sucked up into Kyle Partridge's rear wheel and I hit my funny bone really hard," Reed said. He hit his ulnar nerve which is what gives you that 'funny' tingling feeling in your arm. He said that he couldn't move his ring finger or little finger on his right hand for about 10 minutes and at Salt Lake he was sporting a nice set of bruises on that arm. He's okay although a little over it. "I just want to get supercross over with so we can go outdoors," he claimed.



# AMERICAN IDIOT

## PAYING UP!

OUR STATESIDE GURU PAYS A BIG PENALTY TO THE MOTO GODS...

Words and photo by Steve Cox

I was a local pro motocross racer in the mid '90s here in Southern California where I live. Through the years, I've gotten fat, I've gotten fit, I've gotten the itch to race and I've had times where I didn't feel like riding at all. But through all of that I have always been a really good, solid, smooth and even fast motocross rider. But I'm also guilty of believing that since I don't really push myself anymore I'm not really at much risk of hurting myself riding motocross. For most of the last 17 years since I quit racing I've avoided injury by riding well within my limits. Here's a quick comparison...

When I raced from the age of 10 until I was 19 I rode two or three times a week and raced at least once a weekend (but many times two or three times) as long as I was healthy. During that decade I broke my left tib/fib, right ankle (a couple of times in multiple places), four ribs and both bones in my left wrist coming out to a total of 16 bones (that I know about as there were quite a few occasions when I should've probably gotten X-rays and didn't). In addition I dislocated my left shoulder twice and my right hip twice and was KO'd approximately eight times. Motocross is a rough sport. Now, I acknowledge that many of these injuries can be attributed to me making mistakes because I was still learning but what about the following 17 years?

Since I quit racing I've ridden as much as twice a month and as little as twice a year so that lack of frequency should account for some of the disparity here but in that time I fractured my left wrist about three years ago (I didn't even crash in that one) and then about three weeks ago I broke my left femur, got knocked out bruised just about everything and cut my abdomen wide open. It was a big one. My wife says that during the time I was sort of in and out of consciousness, I told her I was going to quit riding. But people say crazy sh't when they're half-unconscious.

I've got a rod in my femur now and I can't

sleep through the night because it's impossible to get comfortable without Vicodin or weed (it's legal in California). But those of you who are racers (that is to say people who are currently racers or were formerly racers – once a racer, always a racer) will understand my biggest dilemma about this whole fiasco – I don't know for sure what happened. And that's the scariest part of all of it.

I knew a long time ago that what I've done to my body over the years would eventually catch up to me so I'm not worried about the femur. And the concussion? What's the difference between eight and nine, really? Not much, I figure. So, none of this stuff ultimately worries me. But as a racer I want to know why I went down and I simply don't know. And if you don't know, how do you prevent it from happening next time? That's the part that gets me.

I was riding my RM250 (two-stroke, bitches) at Milestone MX and I was literally the only guy hitting a rhythm section out of a turn and going 3-2-2 while everyone else was going 2-2-2-1. But I wasn't really pushing myself. Most of the others were squids so I'm not bragging. I had done it about a dozen times before the crash. But that is where I crashed. An eyewitness told me he "thinks" that I over jumped the triple-in and landed on the face of the fourth jump which is what led to me crashing so hard and so awkwardly. But that doesn't really make sense because I was barely greasing the triple every lap with everything I had. How could I just over jump it all of a sudden?

But this is the life of a motocrosser. No matter how safe you make yourself feel this isn't a safe sport. And the truth is, if it were completely safe, we'd probably all lose interest.

I guess sometimes you just have to pay up to the Moto Gods. I hope my debt is clear for a while...







Jack Gardner (131) yanks the holey ahead of Ben Saunders (2) and MX2 series leader Richard Cannings (999)

## AMCA UPDATE!

CONSISTENCY COUNTS FOR CANNINGS AS AMATEUR CHAMPS HOT UP...

**D**K Off-Road Kawasaki's Richard Cannings currently holds a healthy 13 point lead in the AMCA MX2 motocross championship despite not having won a moto at either of the first two rounds that were held at Nympsfield and Frocester. A 2-4-3 scorecard at round one and a 3-2-2 at round two put him ahead of Ben Saunders and Jack Cox in the hotly contested series. In the six motos run so far there have been five race winners – Saunders, Cox, Paul Neale, Carl Benjamin and Ryan Morris who's the only man to have won two. In the MX1 class it's Lee Dunham and Brad Turner who are locked at the top

of the title chase having won three motos each and then taken two seconds and one third place apiece. Cousins Elliott and Clinton Barrs are currently best of the rest while Shane Holmes rounds out the top five.

## SERIES STANDINGS

### MX1

1	Lee Dunham	338
2	Brad Turner	338
3	Elliott Barrs	275

### MX2

1	Richard Cannings	309
2	Ben Saunders	296
3	Jack Cox	291

LPE's Brad Anderson is desperately unlucky to derail a chain at Foxhill



# FOX THRILLER!

BRADSHAW AND WHATLEY ARE THE MEN TO BEAT AT WULF MOUNTAINS...

**P**utoline Honda's Neville Bradshaw cashes in at the second round of the Wulfsport British Masters at Foxhill by taking the MX2 win and then finishing second overall in the MX1 class behind MBO's man on form – Kristian Whatley. K-What's simply unstoppable in MX1 and powers to two easy victories beating Bradshaw across the line in race one and the still settling in Brad Anderson second time out. A derailed chain in race one costs Ando dearly and Maxxis LPE Kawasaki's great hope ends the day in a lowly seventh overall. With Anderson out of the equation in the overall running it's 250F mounted pilots Bradshaw and Graeme Irwin who round out the podium while Luke Hawkins, Gert Krestinov and Josh Waterman are best of the rest.

Irwin would've been in contention for an MX2 podium n'all if his Suzuki hadn't ground to a halt midway through moto two after he'd won the first. With the Ulsterman sidelined there's simply no stopping Bradshaw who takes the overall with a 2-1 scorecard and the championship lead from Pendrich

Kawasaki's Bryan MacKenzie. JAR Honda's Lewis Tombs takes third overall on the day while Luke Norris fills that spot in the series standings after ending the day sixth overall.

In the amateur classes Dan Hutchinson increases his series lead in MX1 with Jimmy Saville lookalike Luke Meredith moving into second in the rankings after a stellar outing at Foxhill. In MX2 round one winner Richard Cannings also extends his lead although he's beaten by Adam Wells on the day. With the win in the bag Wells moves into second in the series standings ahead of Zac Stealey who finishes fourth overall at Foxhill behind George Clarke.

Shaun Scrivens extends his lead in the Pirelli MX1 class with a 1-1-4-1 scorecard over the weekend. Now sitting on a 42 point lead he's definitely the man to beat as is Bradley Wheeler in the MX2 division. The Bristolian currently sits on an eight race win streak and has a 65 point lead over the rider who is runner-up on the day at Foxhill and currently second in the series standings – Aiden Wigger.

The series swings by Whitby for round three on May 25/26.

## SERIES STANDINGS

### PRO MX1

1	Kristian Whatley	186
2	Gert Krestinov	166
3	Luke Hawkins	148

### PRO MX2

1	Neville Bradshaw	188
2	Bryan MacKenzie	184
3	Luke Norris	155

### AMATEUR MX1

1	Dan Hutchinson	392
2	Luke Meredith	336
3	Chad Yarranton	321

### AMATEUR MX2

1	Richard Cannings	379
2	Adam Wells	363
3	Zac Stealey	353

### PIRELLI MX1

1	Shaun Scrivens	388
2	Daniel Chapman	346
3	Jason Kendrick	335

### PIRELLI MX2

1	Bradley Wheeler	400
2	Aiden Wigger	335
3	Ryan Osborn	313



# SMOKIN' ACES!

THE OIL BURNERS LIGHT UP  
LOVELY LANDRAKE...

The two sweetest sounding days of race action heard so far this year had to be at Landrake as the 2-Stroke British Championship kicked off as part of the Red bull Pro Nationals weekend in Cornwall.

The Open class smokers started proceedings on a sunny Saturday afternoon with a pair of wins for Josh Waterman. However, a moto three DNF opened up the door for Ulsterman Robert Hamilton who was only too happy to claim overall honours ahead of Luke Dean and Daniel Brough. Chris Povey takes overall victory in the Junior division with maximum points finishing ahead of the equally consistent runner-up Jack Gregory and Terry Lloyd.

Sunday's weather ain't nearly so sweet but that doesn't deter the 125 pilots who put on one hell of a show. If there's one man who masters the track in all conditions it's Lewis Gregory who takes maximum points on his Yamaha. "Originally I was going to race MX2 but all year I'm on a 125 only and it's nice to get in among the same bikes instead of racing 250Fs," explains Lulu. "I've really enjoyed it - back to my roots!" Brough finishes second overall in the lightweight division ahead of Lewis King in third.

Suzuki mounted Rob Holyoake edges out Josh Coleman and Callum Sloman for the win in the Junior class...

## SERIES STANDINGS

### 125 EXPERT

1	Lewis Gregory	75
2	Daniel Brough	62
3	Lewis King	54

### 125 JUNIOR

1	Rob Holyoake	65
2	Josh Coleman	60
3	Callum Sloman	58

### OPEN EXPERT

1	Robert Hamilton	63
2	Luke Dean	55
3	Daniel Brough	52

### OPEN JUNIOR

1	Chris Povey	75
2	Jack Gregory	66
3	Terry Lloyd	58

## WIN!WIN!WIN!

BLACKROCK TYRE PACKAGE  
UP FOR GRABS...

Blackrock are a relatively new tyre brand on the block but the budget-priced yet still high performance products are definitely proving popular with cash-strapped racers. While competitively priced tyres are great there's one thing that's greater and that's free tyres so we've hooked up with the nice chaps at Blackrock ([www.frosystems.com/blackrock](http://www.frosystems.com/blackrock)) to offer one lucky reader a Blackrock tyre package that consists of one front tyre, two rears, a t-shirt and a cap you can wear during those trips to the podium.

All you have to do to be in with a chance of winning this sweet prize is answer this oh-so simple question. Which of the following is a bonafide tyre brand?

Is it: A: Blackrock  
B: Bedrock  
C: Blackpool rock  
D: Big black rock

If you reckon you know the answer then log on to our awesome website - [www.dirtbikerider.com](http://www.dirtbikerider.com) - and then follow the competitions link in **dirtZone**. The first correct answer drawn randomly after the closing date of **June 7** will win the tyre package.



## DANGEROUS

### BLAST OFF!

DANGEROUS GETS OFF TO A STUNNING START IN THE AMCA CHAMPIONSHIPS AND FINDS TIME TO TAKE IN A DUTCH TREAT OR TWO - FRIKANDEL...

Words by Lee Dunham Photo by MD Photography

The first round of the AMCA championship was held at Nympsfield. It's a pretty cool circuit - maybe not so much for viewing as some of the track is hidden but for us riders it's fun even though it's surprisingly hard graft!

The day went pretty good for me. I went pole in qualifying, then ran a 1-1-2 race card to give me the overall. I was happy to come away with the red plate after the first round - it's a really good feeling especially after the troubles I had two weekends prior in France.

I holeshot the first moto but Brad Turner squeezed by me on the first lap and was riding really good! At around the halfway stage Turner, myself and Barrsy had a little cushion from the others. I passed Brad a few laps from home and it stayed like that until the finish.

The second moto went pretty much the same although it was Shane Holmes who had the lead in the early stages. Once Brad and I passed him we ran our own race until the end. In the final race I misread the gate and went slightly too early. Turner was out in front as Clint and I came through from around seventh or eighth to close down on Brad and chase him all the way to the flag. At the finish less than two seconds

separated all three of us. In all honestly it was a cool meeting. As usual the crowd at Nympsfield and the Club always put on a good show and this certainly was one of the best meetings I'd been to in a while.

The next round was at Frocester. It's kinda like four fields and a footpath away from Nympsfield but I didn't really mind it as I'm only around five minutes from both tracks - talk about on your doorstep. Because of this my granddad was able to pop along and watch both meetings. It was ace having him there to eat all my sandwiches - bless him!

The day went fantastic considering what we were up

against. In qualifying my bike started making a funny sound so my dad and KB Racing stripped it and couldn't find an issue. I managed to post pole in qualifying in the last lap after spending the whole of session trying to get a clear track. The noise had got worse by now and so they stripped more of the bike to try and diagnose it however nothing obvious could be found.

While on the start line for race one I almost called my spare bike up as while sitting there waiting for the previous race to finish the bike decided it was ready to go and launched forward - it could have been a 'You've Been Framed' moment. So anyway, I ended up third in the first race which was good. The bike got stripped again but still nothing was found.

In the second moto Turner and I were out in front only for the race to be red flagged. I went back to the pits and we were forced on to the spare bike for the rerun. After a little rethink on lines I pulled through to second and finished less than a second behind Turner who again was riding really well.

KB Racing adjusted my suspension a tad for the final moto and it made a big difference. It gave me lots of confidence and I went out and won the final race which boosted my points tally for the day. I was real pleased with the overall result and I can't thank my dad and KB Racing for sorting the bikes on the day - they were on it like a tramp on chips!

After a few weeks of local races - as the Czech IMBA round got cancelled - we decided to pop over the water and race a Dutch National at Reusel. It was awesome! Although it got really Bob Gnarly it was a real fun day! And also I got to have a couple of frikandel specials - if you're ever over in Holland try one, or two!

It was pretty good to see the differences between how the UK run races and how the Dutch do it. After seeing the way the opening two AMCA championship rounds were run - and the number of spectators that came and watched and loved it - I'd have said we're doing it pretty good!

*Lee Dunham*  
#28



Not even flawless tricks like this can put Levi Sherwood on top of the podium in Dubai



© Jörg Mitter/Red Bull Content Pool

# X FACTOR!

DANY TORRES TURNS UP THE HEAT WITH A WICKED WIN IN DUBAI...

Words by Rob Warner

For round two of the Red Bull X-Fighters World Tour we returned to Dubai for the third consecutive year although this time moving from Jumeirah beach inland to be in the shadow of the worlds tallest building – the awe inspiring Burj Khalifa – where a much bigger course welcomed the riders.

In the run up to the event 2012 series winner Levi Sherwood openly admitted there was nothing he could do to match the groundbreaking brilliance of round one winner Thomas Pages whose unorthodox approach to the sport has left the best freestyle riders in the world playing catch up. Sherwood said he had no interest in learning the dangerous body varial moves championed by the French rider but instead he would carry on doing his thing and wait for Pages to make mistakes. A brave move perhaps but Levi – after a near fatal crash a couple of years ago – is a very different, more mature and calculated rider.

Remi Bizouard was one of the riders trying to match the progression of Pages by going for the Flair out of the quarter-pipe. An under rotation saw him out of the event with a badly broken leg. And Josh Sheehan the Australian double flip legend was lucky to walk away after under rotating two double backflip attempts – still the most frightening move in FMX. Most of the big guns made it through the early rounds though leaving us with some breathtaking match-ups in the semis.

The first would see Robbie Adelberg up against 2011 series champ Dany Torres. The brilliant Torres came out on top this time but Adelberg is maturing and promises to bring a game-changing body varial trick to the next round in Glen Helen which with the rest of his riding is sure to see him climb up the scoreboard.

In semi two Sherwood would ride first while Pages looked on. It was vintage Levi with his double combo flips coupled with the biggest extensions in the game and perfect execution setting

the standard for Pages to beat.

Thomas took to the course, starting as usual with the most difficult trick in his repertoire the Special Flip followed with the Vault and no less than two perfect Flairs. While the rest of the field are getting still getting their heads around his insane aerial acrobatics Thomas continues to push the envelope of what a man and machine are capable of. If he'd put the brakes on no doubt he'd have been in the final but with seconds to go he uncharacteristically went for a flip trick off the super kicker getting it all wrong and coming down in a big heap, thankfully unhurt. Whether he meant to or not, Sherwood's immaculate run had unsettled Pages and the final was set.

What a final it would be – both previous winners here and both knowing that those years they had gone on to take the overall title.

Sherwood again was brilliant and with his judge-pleasing extensions it would mean that Torres would need everything in his huge bag of tricks to

beat him. And he didn't disappoint.

Perhaps not as beautiful to watch as his adversary – but just having the edge on difficulty pulling out the 'double grab' flip just when he needed to while the ridiculous looking 'Paris Hilton' would just give a deserving Torres the win and the series lead perhaps leaving Sherwood asking if perfect technique is now not enough.

In a month's time the tour returns to the world's biggest FMX playground at Glen Helen for round three and with only 35 points separating the three big dogs at the top of the table it's shaping up to be another amazing year.

## RED BULL X-FIGHTERS

### SERIES STANDINGS

1	Dany Torres	180
2	Thomas Pages	165
3	Levi Sherwood	145
4	Rob Adelberg	110
5	Josh Sheehan	65

Higashino takes gold in Moto X Freestyle



# LATINO KNIGHTS!

THE X GAMES ELITE BATTLE IT OUT IN BRAZIL...

Photos by Steve Cox

Foz do Iguaçu hosted the Brazilian stop of this year's X Games tour and it was 2012 gold medallist Taka Higashino who grabbed the win in the event closing Moto X Freestyle. The Japanese rider – who wore an Eigo Sato patch on his pants in honour of his friend who dies in February – edged out Aussie Rob Adelberg and X Games rookie Wes Agee to take the win. "I feel like it's not true, like I'm still sleeping," said Taka after hearing the results. "It's crazy. This is fantastic."

Jeremy Stenberg won his third Best Whip gold medal on the bounce after

taking 36 per cent of the vote. Fans voted to decide the outcome of the contest on Twitter by using the hashtag #BestWhip to @FordFiesta – an X Games sponsor. Twitch beat Spaniard Edgar Torrenteras and the world's nicest douche-bag Josh Hansen in what's now nothing more than a popularity contest. "It was a good whip contest for sure," said Twitch. "I'm just pumped I came up with another gold. Best Whip, to me, it's just fun, you know what I mean? I just have a lot of fun doing whips, even in the hills, hanging out with my boys... whips have always been the best."



**Kawasaki**  
Team Green



**WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN!**

**A DAY AT THE RACES WITH TEAM GREEN AND A KICK-ASS  
COLLECTION OF ALIAS, MONSTER AND EKS BRAND GOODIES...**

**H**ow would you like to spend a day out at a top race with a top youth race team? Well, win this competition and we can promise you just that – full hospitality for two at an Elite Youth Cup round of your choice with the Team Green Kawasaki

team. And to sweeten the deal further we'll even throw in a Monster Energy goody bag, a set of Alias race kit and some EKS Brand goggles n'all.

So to be in with a chance of bagging this great prize package – and getting to hang out with some of the fastest youth racers

around – we just need you to tell us which of these racers does not race for Team Green UK?

**Is it:** **A:** Todd Kellett  
**B:** Billy King  
**C:** Dylan Woodcock  
**D:** Preston Williams  
**E:** Justin Bogle

If you know the answer then log on to our website – [www.dirtbikerider.com](http://www.dirtbikerider.com) – and then follow the competitions link in **dirtZone**. The first correct answer randomly drawn after the closing date of **June 7** will win this amazing prize package. Good luck everyone!

**Kawasaki**  
Team Green





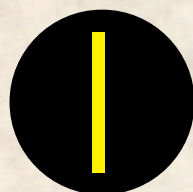
Can you tell what's genuine here and what's not?



# FAKE GOODS!

## HOW COUNTERFEIT PRODUCTS ARE BECOMING A GENUINE PROBLEM IN THE OFF-ROAD SCENE...

Words and photos by **Sutty**



It's not uncommon to see stuff like counterfeit clothing at motocross events as it seems many unscrupulous companies are only too willing to exploit the popularity of brands like Monster and

Red Bull to make a quick quid. And although by my reckoning you'd be morally wrong to wear that swag you could argue that that kind of counterfeit crime ain't actually doing any real harm – except to your street cred, bro.

But the kind of counterfeit crime we're about to tell you about is likely to do someone some real harm, real soon. And that's because some dodgy fecker – somewhere out there in the world

– is knocking out knock off Pro Taper products like handlebars, grips and bar pads.

If you're a regular eBay'er you've no doubt already seen a plethora of dodgy looking Pro Taper grips on offer. The bad news is they're now appearing in motorcycle shops around the country and it seems like that's just the tip of the iceberg – we recently got our hands on some fake Pro Taper SE handlebars, Synergy grips and a fake Pro Taper Rockstar 2.0 bar pad n'all.

While the downright dodgy printing on the bar pad is only gonna damage your eyes, the grips and handlebars are a genuine safety issue because you really don't wanna be messing around with substandard controls and stuff. And these are definitely substandard – the grips are hard and slippery while the handlebars are

known to snap with minimal force.

So what can you do to ensure that you don't accidentally buy knock off gear like this? Well, unless you've got the genuine part to hand for direct comparison it can be quite tricky but we can give you some easy points to look out for. Another good way to tell if something is dodgy is to compare the Suggested Retail Price of the genuine Pro Taper product compared to the part you've been offered over at the Apico website – [www.apico.co.uk](http://www.apico.co.uk) – because if something seems too cheap to be true then it possibly is. While it's only possible for dealers to order from the site at present each and every retail price is listed along with a full and frank description of each and every product so it's an excellent portal for people needing to know cold, hard facts. Check





*Although they might look quite similar the difference in quality between the genuine and fake parts is huge*



it out and see for yourself.

But, moving back to what to look out for... Well, starting with the bar pad the thing we're looking at here is the quality of printing on the cover – it's just fuzzy and generally naff looking.

On to the grips now and some douche bag has gone a long way to fool you into thinking these puppies are genuine as they've even copied the bonafide Pro Taper packaging pretty closely. If you just picked them up off the shelf your first thought would most likely be 'hey, these Pro Taper grips are pretty sh\*t' which really ain't fair because the proper ones are really good. Anyhoo, the product description on the packaging is copied word for word and the only thing missing on the batch we saw was the Pro Taper URL – [www.protaper.com](http://www.protaper.com) – and a

complete lack of product identification barcode that all genuine Pro Taper products carry. Two last differences – and these are biggies – is the fact that these fake grips look nothing like anything in Pro Taper's range and they have donuts on. I ain't ever seen a pair of Pro Taper grips come with donuts – or with the logo printed on – so they're pretty big signals right there.

Last but by no means least come the SE handlebars – in this case minibike specific ones. Although they started the oversize handlebar revolution back in the 1990s Pro Taper have also worked hard since to make their 7/8 inch bars winners too which is why unscrupulous so and sos would go to the effort of copying their goods.

Of all the counterfeit products we've seen these are the hardest to spot although there

are still subtle differences between the genuine article and fakes – starting with some missing branding below the crossbar clamps. On the genuine bar the clutch side is knurled to the very end while the counterfeit one ain't and the proper Pro Taper part has helpful marks to show you where to shorten your bars if you feel the need. The crossbar and clamps are also of varying quality although without the products side by side you'd struggle to spot the difference.

So what should you do if you spot dodgy Pro Taper – or any other brand – parts? Well, don't buy them for starters and then either give your local Trading Standards office a ring or call the UK distributor for the parts you're concerned about and simply let them know what you've seen and where you've seen it.



## ALPINESTARS

### ATLAS GLOVE

Alpinestars claim that Atlas gloves have an innovative and ultra-lightweight design that provides riders with unsurpassed levels of feel and comfort. We can't argue...

**Price:** £64.99

**Supplier:** Alpinestars.com

**Contact:** CI Sport 01372 378000



## USWE

### RACING HYDRATION PACKS

When it comes to performing under pressure it's essential to stay well hydrated or in layman's terms – wetter is better! And that's where USWE have got your backs because their range of hydration bottles and packs will keep you moist in the heat of the battle. From the pre-race Grid Pro bottle to the top of the range H4 hydration pack there's something to suit almost all activities so check them out online at [www.uswe-sports.com](http://www.uswe-sports.com).

**Price:** Grid Pro bottle 19,95 euro

H2 hydration pack 69 euro

H4 hydration pack 89 euro

**Supplier:** uswe-sports.com

**Contact:** +46 (0)706 35 21 06



## THOR

### VERGE HELMET

Developed by three-time SX champ Ryan Villopoto THOR's all-new Verge helmet is constructed from a hand laid fibreglass/Kevlar composite with a contoured eye port gasket that improves goggle fit and increases peripheral vision. The Verge also features increased liner and EPS ventilation for maximum airflow as well as a removable and washable, antibacterial, moisture wicking liner. Available mid May from your local THOR dealer.

**Price:** TBC

**Supplier:** madison.co.uk

**Contact:** 0870 034 7226

## FORMA

### TERRAIN BOOTS

If you're on a tight budget then Forma have got a sweet treat for your feet as these sub-£100 dirt track sneakers are great value for money. Featuring many of the, erm, features that boots costing way more enjoy – like leather uppers, injection moulded plastic protection, adjustable buckles and a steel toe cap – you could do much, much worse. Check 'em out at your local dirt bike emporium.

**Price:** £99.99

**Supplier:** apico.co.uk

**Contact:** 01282 473190





## FACTORY A.R.M.E GAS CAP VENT HOSE

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# CASTAWAY?

DEAN WILSON'S CAREER HAS BEEN IN THE DOLDRUMS OF LATE WITH INJURIES, TEAM TROUBLES AND WHATNOT BUT THE SPEEDY SCOT'S CAREER IS FAR FROM BEING STRANDED...

Words by Adam Wheeler Photos by Ray Archer

**D**ean Wilson is a little bit like that cool cousin who lives overseas and you barely get to see. The 21 year old is already in the record books for his 2011 AMA National championship victory and he is the flamboyant and outgoing result of a Brit mashed with Floridian, California and Canadian culture. He has Glasgow roots but has been living in North America since 2006. Just through his cheeky tweets alone he is something a little different from the typical AMA racer but watch any of his skills around a supercross track and there is a clear division from anything we're used to watching in Europe.

Ever since he raced at the 2011 Motocross des Nations in France with a broken wrist Wilson has not endured the best of fortune and his luck reached a trough with the evaporation of a fresh deal to race 450s with the Jeff Ward Kawasaki team towards the end of 2012. Mitch Payton at Pro Circuit gladly threw a life ring to the six foot racer he groomed from being a gawky teenager and he was a sure-bet for a last stab at a 250SX title until a heat race crash at Indianapolis resulted in more broken bones and a collapsed lung.

To get the latest perspective on Dean we spoke to him in two parts. The first in the Californian heat at the impossibly neat Pro Circuit test track – with Ray Archer later taking plenty of snaps at the house he uses for West Coast duties – and then catching up over the phone a month after the fateful Indy smash that left his Lites ambitions in tatters.



**DBR:** So, how have you been passing the days?

**DW:** "Well as we speak I'm hoping for good news from the doctors but otherwise I've been passing the days by hanging out with my friends and going to the beach quite a lot here in Florida. I've been road biking to try and keep my fitness up a little bit and watched lots of films on Netflix! Watched some Inbetweeners, some Trainspotting... They weren't too happy that I had been cycling but I felt well enough. The idea is to be resting as much as possible but I get the point where my 'ADD' kicks in and I have to do something and can't keep laying about."

**DBR:** Who is 'they'?

**DW:** "Mitch, the doctors and all them."

**DBR:** I guess cycling might be a bit problematic...

**DW:** "On the lung and the rib... they weren't that keen on it but I was feeling okay."

**DBR:** Sometimes it almost seems you AMA racers take advantage of an injury to also get some respite from the hectic schedule but as you had a problem last year and now been injured again does the downtime piss you off?

**DW:** "Yeah, but at least it is not an injury that is as long as the last one [shoulder] and I should be back quicker. It is just a shame because I felt so good this year. After the first one [SX in Dallas which he won] I knocked my head a little bit silly in practice and I was just getting back on my feet and to that top level again at Indianapolis. I felt comfortable and confident that I would have that red plate back. I knew I could win that championship. I was definitely 'well gutted'."

**DBR:** Is it a hard to see guys like Wil Hahn, Blake Wharton and Marvin Musquin winning? With respect to those riders it appeared you were initially on a bit of a different level...

**DW:** "Oh man... we went to Houston because we've been driving back from California to Florida as the doctors were concerned about my lung if I was flying. We decided to stop there and cut the journey in half and it was burning me inside watching them. I should have been out there winning. It sucked and wasn't a fun experience at all."

**DBR:** What does a collapsed lung feel like?

**DW:** "Weird. I didn't even know it had happened but I realised my ribs were broken and it was a consequence of that. I actually wanted to get fixed up and keep on racing but I couldn't because when I tried to ride my chest puffed up and I couldn't breathe very well. After two laps it felt like my heart was going to pop out of my chest. I knew there was no way I could race and after a bunch of x-rays and MRIs they saw the lung."

>>







**DBR:** When you have a crash like that obviously you are hurting because of the injury but do you also replay it in your head because of what you lost?

**DW:** "Definitely. You think about all the work and sweat and effort through the off-season and how it wasn't really worth it because of that one moment! It had started so well for me in Dallas and before I hit my head..."

"The years are ticking on now. I am still young but I feel like I should have had a Supercross championship. It should have been last season or maybe even the one before that. For some reason I keep on blowing it! But I refuse to give up. A positive thing at least is that I should hopefully be ready for the Outdoors."

**DBR:** You mention the passing of years and you must be learning a bit about yourself and racing as time goes on but you also must be getting close to mastering patience by now...

**DW:** "Yeah... but I think the biggest thing was fully realising that you go all guns blazing in the Main Event and not in a heat race! It is also true that you learn about your real friends when you are injured. After Dallas I saw people all over me but when I was hurt and not at the track I was forgotten about pretty fast."

**DBR:** Many people say that and it seems a bit of a cliché but is it really true?

**DW:** "Oh yeah! When you win you easily get a bunch of new friends and a load of nut-hangers and when the limelight isn't there any more then they are all gone. When you are injured and your friends come and visit you, support of you and come and hang out with you then you know who are the true people you can rely on."

**DBR:** People could well be wondering what is next for you after some unsettled moments during the off-season with the team and bike...

**DW:** "Right now I honestly want to have a good summer. I'm not looking much further at the moment. I didn't even race last summer so I just want to re-build myself. I want to be a top three guy in the 450 class and I think that is achievable... if I can stay safe and focus. It's happened a few times where people have been quick to write me off and it is very motivating to turn around or silence opinions. I have a two year contract with Mitch so I will be with him next season as well. I just need to get healthy, fit and find the good results. I want to use this 450 championship to learn ready for a full go next year. You never know what can happen in the future. I was pretty seriously considering going to the GPs but I wanted to race a 250 coast class in Supercross and the dates for both series clashed. I had a full-on chance to do it with CLS but I didn't want to do just the World Championship, I wanted Supercross as well."

**DBR:** Is going to Grand Prix just talk or can you really see yourself in the FIM World Championship series?

**DW:** "My goal is to win everything I can. I've already won an Outdoor championship so I've knocked that off the list and the Supercross one is next. If I can do that then it's two massive accomplishments and it would be sweet to come to GPs. I think I might still have time to consider MX2 but 450 is also okay. To be honest a lot of people dream about coming to race in America and I'm pretty happy where I am right now."

**DBR:** It was unusual to hear you as AMA National champion at the 2011 Motocross des Nations talking about racing GPs. It was something of a reversal of trend...

**DW:** "I wouldn't have such a hard time fitting in because I grew up in Scotland and I've done some travelling. It wouldn't be bad for me and I like racing and having fun. To be able to travel



*Riding for Team GB is something Dean's keen to do again this year*







*The red plate just looks right on Wilson's bike*

# CASTAWAY?





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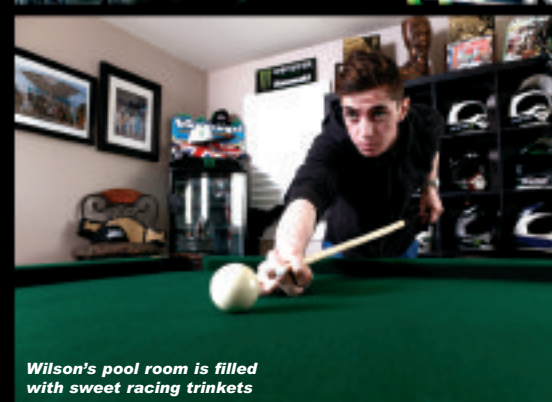
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Winning the 2011 outdoor title was the highlight of Wilson's career so far...



Dean enjoys the spoils of success



Wilson's pool room is filled with sweet racing trinkets

the world and race your dirt bike is a pretty amazing job. It was something I was thinking about."

**DBR:** Did your friendship with Tommy Searle help set your mind towards Europe?  
**DW:** "A little bit... but not that much because when I started my first pro year in 2010 I already had it in my mind that I would want to do GPs. It would be a fun challenge and a change. The travelling and seeing other countries is something you don't do everyday! You have to enjoy life and explore a bit. Tommy is such a good laugh. I feel bad because I was giving him so much sh\*t after Valkenswaard. He said the best part of that weekend was driving out of the track afterwards!"

**DBR:** Do you think you are something of a lone voice over in the US when it comes to Grand Prix?

**DW:** "I don't know. I heard Villopoto fancies trying it. I think a lot more AMA riders are getting more into the GP circuit now and there is more interest to know what is going on whereas a few years ago nobody knew who the riders were. They'd go to the Nations and wonder who was the guy that had just beat them! I think the GPs have become more established over here now."

**DBR:** You've been privy to a few contract dealings recently could you still have done quite well financially if you were a GP racer? Is the gap closer than people think?  
**DW:** "Yeah, I could have done quite well. The contract offer I had from CLS was really good and I could have made a great living over there but, like I said, I still have things on my checklist."

**DBR:** Motocross des Nations. Would you be up for it again?  
**DW:** "Oh yeah! Without a doubt! Get me and

Tommy on there and I don't know who it would be between Anstie or Nicholls but we would have a good shout. I want to get on the box there and riding for GB is important so we need to do it and make the fans proud."

**DBR:** How do you look back on that career limbo period now where you had made the decision to leave Pro Circuit, courted a few offers, signed for a different team, saw the deal fall through and then go back to Pro Circuit?  
**DW:** "There was a lot of controversy around that period and it started from me feeling sure I wanted to move to the 450s when I was injured. I know I can ride a 450 really well. The situation with Ward seemed so good – a good salary, nice bonuses, I was supposed to be getting factory parts, I could keep on being a Monster rider and overall it seemed too good to be true. In the end they didn't get the sponsor they needed to go racing so I needed to look elsewhere but >>





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I wasn't really too worried at the time because there seemed to be many good people who wanted me and I was pretty close to going to Chad Reed's team and he was trying really hard but things didn't come together with Honda. Mitch was kind enough [to offer a new deal] and I had to think about it a lot to give the Lites class one more go. Luckily I was never really too concerned about getting a good ride because there were good people in my corner."

**DBR:** Did that make you feel disillusioned with racing?

**DW:** "A little bit but people were warning us about the team and there were a few little signs that it was sketchy but when I signed with the team I was fully committed and I put my trust in people. That's what you've got to do when you're in a team – you have to be a team player. I went off to do my bit with the training and we started doing some testing and it seemed to be fine until I got a phone call one day saying 'we don't have the funds'. That was that and I ended up being really happy that Mitch let me back on the team so late into the season."

**DBR:** Was that a 'cap in hand' situation with Pro Circuit?

**DW:** "Well my agent dealt with the details but I think Mitch was pleased that I was prepared to come back. He has always been really good to me and it is one of the best teams out there."

**DBR:** You are fully ingrained into the American way to live. Is it something you are totally happy with? Can you be here indefinitely?

**DW:** "I've been here six years now and I also enjoyed Canada a lot when I was there but Scotland is always going to be home because that's where I grew up and where a lot of my family is. That's why I quite like being at my house in Florida most of the time because it is not so busy, it's quite green and ordered. It is much more mellow. You can do your riding, your training and then just relax whereas in California there is traffic everywhere and it is a busier lifestyle. It is good being here at times during the season but I think Florida is better for me."

**DBR:** Are you aware of your profile and how you need to build it as a professional sportsman? It seems you have embraced the fun and spirit of Twitter to the full...

**DW:** "I just try to act like a normal person or not to act differently just because I am a Pro racer."

**DBR:** So there is no 'Brand Wilson'?

**DW:** "Ha! No, I think I'm a normal kid who likes to have fun and enjoy life. I know that if I die tomorrow then I had a pretty good time of it."

**DBR:** Can you see the contradiction between being a normal kid and someone who brings 50,000 people to their feet clapping? It is like having rock star status...

**DW:** "I guess so. I guess you could look at it like that but I don't. I think people might like me for who I am and I don't like to be snobby or push people away. Something I dreamed about when I was a wee boy was signing autographs and taking pictures with fans. It can get on top of you sometimes and when you've had a bad moto or a result then I've had moments when I wasn't the nicest guy but it is just bad timing and I think everyone has moments when they'd rather be left alone. But I have to say it is a dream to be doing this."



Up until his injury Deano looked like the man to beat in the East coast series







# TOM TOM!

AFTER LOSING HIS WAY A LITTLE TOM SAGAR'S  
NOW BACK ON TRACK AND KNOWS EXACTLY  
WHERE HE'S HEADED...

Words and photos by Future 7 Media



At the end of last year I took stock of where I'm at and what I want to be doing. I felt I needed a change. After riding for Paul Edmondson's team for three years I wanted to stand on my own two feet.

I wanted more control of my racing – what I rode and where I rode it.

"Even though it may look like I've downgraded my set-up, so far it feels like it's working the way I want it to. I've got a loyal group of people behind me offering support and through the help of Colwyn Bay Motorcycles, KTM UK are providing me with bikes to go racing.

"There are no bells and whistles, we're just going racing, having fun and it's already showing in the results – a double win at the opening round of the British Enduro Championship is testament to that. And aside from food poisoning at the opening round of the British Sprint Enduro Championship I was equally competitive.

"I'm also enjoying getting back to racing local events – the ones that offer personal value to me. Adding the Welsh Enduro Championship to my calendar was important. I've always received good support from the Welsh Council and by competing in that series shows I'm grateful for it – hopefully I can repay them with a championship.

"During the last couple of years I've jumped from bike to bike – never settling. As soon as I got one setup the way I wanted it I was moving on again. Returning to KTM has given me a chance to set that right. I don't know why but of all the bikes I've ever raced it's the one I love best. It's what I feel most comfortable on.

"Whether at world championship or national level I've always delivered my best results on that bike. Don't get me wrong, I've had some good seasons with Honda and Suzuki but not the same enjoyment of riding. When I left KTM I never thought that I'd get the chance to come back, so this year I intend to make the most of it.

"Going back to the European Enduro Championship is like turning full circle. For me that's really where everything began to snowball. I feel like that because I'm able to concentrate on it again it allows me the

opportunity to refocus my riding and what I want to achieve.

"The 2006 European Enduro Championship was where my riding took off and prior to that I was relatively unknown. I had some success but I was just an ex-trials rider figuring out what I wanted to do. At the time I didn't really have a plan but I knew I wanted to race. I just basically packed a van and headed to Europe. Most of the time we just slept on the floor – there was nothing fancy involved – but it was great fun.

"There was a good group of Brits at the races too and we all just helped out each other. It didn't feel like anyone was racing for a championship, we were just having a laugh and enjoyed it. And with it the results came. That year I won the Junior E2 championship and things just grew from there. Suddenly I was something.

"The next year I was part of the D3 Racing squad. Julian Stevens put together a package for the Enduro World Championship and I went straight in at the deep end. That was when things began to get more serious. I was riding in the Enduro Junior class and my results were good.

"We fought for the podium at every round and pushed to win races. It was an incredible year, even if things were happening fast. Before I knew it I was being offered a deal to join the factory team. That's something every rider wishes for but it's not until it happens that it becomes a shock.

"It's easy to see now that maybe things moved too fast but at the time I was simply going with it. Many people have said that riding the 250F was the biggest mistake I've made and in some part I'll agree. But then again, how do you turn down a ride with the best team in the world?

"I wanted the ride but possibly it came at a price. I've never really been a 250F rider. I prefer the bigger bike and I thought that opportunity would come but it never happened. On the whole I had some good results in 2008. I achieved my best ever finish at the ISDE – fourth in class and 14th overall, in Chile in the sand – conditions I'm not supposed to be good at riding in.

"I also won a BEC title on the 250F and if I hadn't have got stuck on the extreme test at the GP of Wales I'd have finished in second place that day. But overall I struggled to >>



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Tom's loving racing again after deciding to do his own thing



adapt to the bike. I didn't have the consistency that I expected out of myself. At home I was riding the best I'd ever done. I could almost do anything I ever wanted on the bike but transferring that to the world scene was an entirely different matter.

"The two bikes just weren't the same and no matter how hard we worked at it we just couldn't get the problems sorted. Sometimes I think that if I raced my British bike abroad things might have been different. But at the time I wasn't worried. I still viewed it as a learning year. I told myself that for the second year I'd get back on a bigger bike and show them what I could do. Unfortunately, I didn't get the opportunity. My results weren't there and I was dropped.

Suddenly it was like 'see you later kid' – and that was tough to take.

"Picking up the Husaberg deal for 2009 I thought I could work my way back into top form again. I told myself that if I put in a solid season I might have a chance of getting back under the KTM awning. But as we all know now that wasn't the bike for me either. Originally I thought it would be similar to the KTM but in reality it was nothing like it. Quite quickly my confidence went downhill.

"Up until 2008 I felt like I could do no wrong but then in 2008 and 2009 I could do nothing right. It was a catalogue of disasters, one after the other. And to be honest they were probably the darkest days of my career – I was ready to

throw in the towel. I thought about quitting. Nothing was fun anymore and I wasn't enjoying riding.

"I began to think about returning to trials, doing some local events and just riding when and if I wanted to. Though at the same time I didn't really want to give up like that. As a fairly competitive person I knew that there were a lot of good races left in me. Luckily, Paul Edmondson spotted what was happening. He approached me during August of that year and said he could help organise a deal to put me back on track. He offered me something concrete to work with.

"In three years with Paul I achieved a lot. They were good times and my only real loss >>>





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was missing out on winning both the BEC and BSEC in 2011. I won four rounds of the BSEC and only missed out on finishing on the podium once during the championship. At the final round in North Wales I was probably riding the best I'd ever done in a long time. I easily won the first day to clinch the title but at the final round of the championship I crashed two corners into the final special test and came down hard on my knee.

"I didn't break anything but twisted it badly. However, with only two weeks until the next round of the BEC at the Knighton there was no time to heal. Without being able to put my foot down I struggled all the weekend and lost a ton of points. At the following round things continued to unravel. I had a problem with the fuel filter and lost two minutes on the time check. I managed to fight back to sixth but it wasn't enough. And despite putting in one of my best ever rides at the Natterjack, the title slipped away. I was gutted to lose out but I suppose things like that are a part of racing.

"Stepping away from the EWC was the break I needed as it gave me the chance to rebuild my results at home. And while I'd love to go back I wouldn't do it to make up the numbers. I want to be a top five or six guy and I feel that if I get my riding back on track then I could be there. But it's also a completely different championship now than what it was in 2007. >>



## TOM'S BITESIZE BITS! EIGHT DAY TRIAL!

*"The Scottish Six Day Trial is one of those events I have to do every year. It's more of a family thing. I ride with my Dad – he's finished about 27 of them now – and the terrain is really enjoyable. My goal is to crack the top 10. I've got close many times but keep missing out. Hopefully this year I can make it happen, but with the race starting the day after the BEC at Helmsley it mean's I'll be riding eight days on the trot."*

### ERZBERG

*"Erzberg was probably the biggest result of my career to date. Finishing second overall in 2007 behind Taddy Blazusiak put me on the map. Before that no one really knew who I was. They thought I was just another British rider trying his luck. Leading the first half of the race and battling with Taddy showed me that I could actually ride a bike. It gave me a massive boost of confidence and at the following EWC rounds in Canada and the US I won some races."*







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"I don't know if it's a changed for the better. From the outside looking in it seems to have lost some of its character. It favours riders of a motocross background. In 2007 we rode some incredible special tests – proper grassy cross tests and long technical forest based enduro tests. The extreme tests were much more natural back then too. For a rider with a trials background it's hard to compete against former MXGP riders. There isn't anywhere technical enough to gain time – maybe that's why hard enduro is becoming so popular. It's still true to form.

"Would I go down the hard enduro path? I don't have an answer to that yet. At the moment I still want to be a timecard enduro rider. That's what I love doing, but it's definitely something I'm beginning to consider very seriously. I've had good success at it in the past – a podium at Erzberg and a couple podiums at the The Tough One.

"I know it's something that I could be handy at if I tried. There's more and more races popping up on the hard enduro calendar every year and I'm sure events like the Red Bull Romaniacs and the Sea to Sky would probably suit me. But it's also a sport that's become quite specialised. Five years ago you could jump in and out of it and still do quite well. Nowadays guys only race those extreme races and I'm not sure if I'm ready yet to completely step away from enduros yet."

## TOM'S BITESIZE BITS!

### MUD BOY

"Living in Wales and growing up riding trials my favoured terrain has usually been mud – the more the better. But lately I've proved I can ride anything. Winning both days of the BEC in Scotland showed I've become a good sand rider. I went there just hoping for at least one win but to come away with two was a massive surprise as I felt that it would be my weakest round of the season. Hopefully if I can keep riding like I did in Scotland then I can end the year with another BEC title."

### TONI BOU

"The first year I rode Toni Bou was in 2002. It was at a European Trials Championship and I finished third overall. Even though he won there was nothing much between us. The following year we met again and it was like looking at a completely different rider. He's been drafted into a trials academy and was riding every single day. On the flipside I was working five days a week and struggling to find days when it wasn't raining to go ride. Judging by the way he was riding I knew then he was going to be impossible to beat and that's when I thought about stepping away from trials."

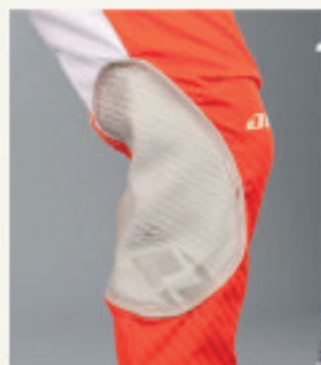




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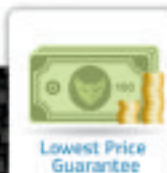
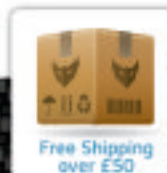
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# PUSHING THE LIMIT!

*FOR NEARLY A DECADE THE  
PAGÈS BROTHERS HAVE BEEN  
INNOVATORS IN THE SPORT OF  
FMX – THIS IS THEIR STORY...*

Words and photos by **Ricky Monti**

**I**n 2005 two young French motocross championship riders – brothers Charles and Tom Pagès from Nantes – moved to Hossegor in the south-west of France. Hossegor is Europe's biggest surf spot but they didn't go there to ride the waves of the ocean – they went to cultivate their freestyle motocross passion.

The Pagès brothers' FMX idol, Manu Troux, was also based in Hossegor. At that time, Manu was easily France's most famous freestyle motocross rider and the first European FMX rider to compete in events in the USA. He competed between 1998 and 2007 when he made his last appearance at the Bercy SX.

During this time a great friendship grew between the Pagès brothers and Manu Troux as they trained in the same park and travelled the world for events together. When Troux retired from FMX his manager – Sebastien Billault – began working with the two Pagès brothers and it was then that they began experiencing their first great success.

In 2008 the Pagès brothers first competed in the Red Bull X-Fighters with the top FMX riders in the world but by 2010 it looked like Charles' career could already be over. Bercy – which had been the last FMX event in Troux's career – also threatened to be the last for Charles Pagès after he had a serious accident while attempting a front flip. It would take him two years to recover.

So, while 2012 was supposed to mark the end of the world for the Mayans for the Pagès brothers it marked the beginning of a new era. It brought great success for Tom – who was second overall in the Red Bull X-Fighters 2012 World Tour – and for Charles who has started to jump again.

We stayed three full days at the Pagès brothers' home so we could live their daily lifestyle 100 per cent. What follows are the first interviews with Tom after his success at the Red Bull X-Fighters and Charles' after his first jump since the accident.

**DBR:** What does the Red Bull X-Fighters mean to you?

**TP:** "For me the X-Fighters is the most important competition of my life and I'm so proud to be part of it. The first time I competed was in 2008 – in Mexico. I can remember feeling so proud to be riding with some of the big names in FMX like Robbie Maddison, Jeremy Stenberg and Jeremy Lusk. I finished in sixth position. After that I went to Fort Worth in Texas and I remember the huge track. I was a little bit scared about it because everything was big! I felt a lot of pressure – it was really stressful.

"In 2008 I didn't go to all the events in the X-Fighters calendar and it was hard to compete with the big stars. Sometimes, during the qualifying, I was in second or third position but during the event I would always make some little mistakes. However, it was in the same year that I did the backflip doublegrab before everyone else.

"Then in 2009 I signed with Red Bull and was part of the X-Fighters World Tour. The first event was in Mexico again and I finished in fifth position. The season was good but not the best for me and so I didn't get invited to compete in the X-Fighters at all in 2010 or '11. After Charles' accident I decided to take a break from jumping as well and I only came back to it last year."

**DBR:** So how has this last year in the X-Fighters tour been?

**TP:** "The last year has been important for me because I wanted to ride my bike without the pressure and stress – just to focus on having fun. My season started much like the previous ones but I was more focused on my love for riding – not only to win or participate in all of the FMX events. I did some videos with my friend Michel Never who filmed me every time I went to the foam pit as I prepared for Best Trick at X Games.

"One week before the X Games I was invited to Glen Helen for the X-Fighters and I was happy just to be >>





| profile

**Tom Pages is a man who  
has revolutionised FMX**







# CHARLIE SAYS...

## CATCHING UP WITH THE OTHER PAGES BROTHER...

**DBR:** We'll start with your crash. Can you describe what happened and how it changed your life?

**CP:** "In 2010 I went to Bercy for the show. I wanted to do a frontflip in front of the crowd and it was the first time I'd done it. I worked a lot on that trick – I made it on dirt maybe 10 times – so I was confident that I could do it. But unfortunately, in this sport sometimes you crash.

"It was the worst crash I had had in my life – it was a serious trauma. After that, it was very hard to walk, to talk or to keep my balance. I had problems with my memory as well. It was impossible to ride after that crash and the doctor told me that walking and speaking properly was already a success. Time went by and I worked with a lot of doctors doing physiotherapy and they said the progress I made was excellent. I told them that I was still unsatisfied because I wasn't able to ride motocross and they told me they thought it would be impossible for me to ride again after the serious trauma I had been through.

"But today after two years of hard work and practising my balance I jumped for the first time and now I believe that my adventure within this sport has become real again."

**DBR:** At that time the frontflip was one of the best tricks around but since then we have seen other new tricks. What is your opinion about the current level of FMX?

**CP:** "I think these days every rider will have best tricks on their list because FMX is starting to imitate BMX. Now, on BMX you can see riders do doubleflip-frontflip combos on their runs – huge tricks like that – and do them perfectly. They need these now to win contests so I think FMX will follow suit.

"Last season Thomas pushed the boundaries so I think FMX riders need to learn more 'best tricks' in the future – you can already see Taka Higashino do the Rock Solid backflip, Jackson Strong the frontflip or Cam Sinclair and Josh Sheehan the double backflip. I think this is the future of FMX so while I'll always ride for pleasure if I can I'll keep trying to do big tricks."

**DBR:** Let's talk about today – two years since your crash and you're back. Can you describe how you felt this morning? Did you just open your eyes and say 'today I'll jump again'?

**CP:** "I was waiting for good weather and last night I knew today would be the day. I thought a lot before sleeping about how to hit the ramp and how to jump exactly like it was the day before a big competition where I had to do a 360 or frontflip. I had the same feeling as if I had to do a really big trick – there was a lot of stress.

"This morning the weather was perfect. When I landed my first jump I felt a mixture of emotions – I was smiling and crying at the same time. I have been thinking about this moment every second, every minute, every hour and every day until now."



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part of such a big event and to ride with my friends. I finished in second position. First of all, I was surprised about it but it was great because all my friends and the media there were too. I hadn't done anything special at Glen Helen – no backflip – but just stuck to my style and my tricks were huge. Also, I liked the track – it was really big and different from other races.

"The week after the X Games I went to Madrid and pulled off my best tricks - like the Special Flip and The Volt – perfectly and finished fourth. Then I went to Munich but I wasn't so excited for that event because I didn't have any new tricks ready – I'd already used all my best tricks in Madrid. Fortunately, they put a quarterpipe in the track and I decided to run my Flair. I was excited but also nervous about doing it. During practice, all the guys pushed me to try it because they knew my level.

"I won in Munich with my best tricks and the Flair. I was so happy with how that event went – I think it was one of my best days in FMX. After that I was pretty anxious though because I

had the same number of points as Levi Sherwood – in joint first position. Everyone kept asking me, 'How does it feel to be joint first with Sherwood?' but I didn't know how to explain.

"One month later was Sydney. After Munich I trained every single day – working on new tricks, working to be perfect on the Special Flip and working to have greater extension in my tricks and also trying the 360. My goal was to be the best in Sydney and when I was there my mind was strong. My bike and the ramps felt good.

"During qualifying I tried the Flair in the quarterpipe four or five times as well as the huge 360 – I think everybody was surprised at my level there. However, in the event I crashed during The Volt and after that I didn't try Special Flip. Also, during the final I tried the backflip and I crashed again.

"So, in Sydney, I was disappointed about what happened but after the event I was so happy because I realised I had come second in the X-Fighters championship – I think it was my best



season and with the best riders!"

**DBR:** How has it been to start again from Mexico in 2013?

**TP:** "Mexico is a really good event – lots of people, the biggest bull arena in the world and riding there is just crazy. But my heart wasn't in the competition. Eigo Sato passed away the week before the event and it was tough for everyone to appreciate the riding and the event. We are all sad and things are never going to be the same – he was like a brother. I went there with Eigo's jersey – it was the only way that I could push myself. I did well after a hard practice session. I worked a lot on the hard tricks over there. Eigo's jersey had to be on the podium. The track was good and technical – there was a super kicker with a short run-up and a step down for the first time. During the event I gave my best on everything. I went big because Eigo use to 'Go Big!'."

**DBR:** Did you sleep the night before the final?

**TP:** "I remember that I was a little bit stressed but I tried not to think about the following day. Usually I try to focus on keeping calm and being quiet. The hours before the event seem never ending and when you are on the bike you are so scared, so staying focused and happy in the run-up to the event is important."

**DBR:** What do you think about Levi Sherwood?

**TP:** "That's a hard question to answer. He is a very good FMX rider – that's clear every time he rides. He is the X-Fighters champion – >>>



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but I think he is too safe. I prefer to watch Josh Sheenan, Jackson Strong or Dany Torres – riders who just go crazy and push hard. Sheenan did three double backflips in one day. Strong tried a frontflip and I know what that takes after my brother's crash. These guys are the best for me. Levi is a trick machine, he makes no mistakes and can be too safe but he is a strong guy and he wins – what else can I say?"

**DBR:** Could you describe how you learnt the Flair?

**TP:** "I decided to do a different trick to everybody else – like Fred Johansson did in Madrid back in 2008. For me it's freestyle so I needed to try every single trick. I put a little quarter pipe near the foam pit where I was training and then I made a ramp for dirt. The movement and the feeling was good so I decided to add it to my trick list. While I was still trying it out I thought maybe I'd try during an event and when I saw the quarter pipe in Munich I decided to try there. I was so scared about it but I'm sure next year some other guys will try the flair. Now I've two ramps for the Flair – one near the foam pit and one on the dirt."

**DBR:** Who are your favourite competitors and

best friends in the sport?

**TP:** "During the X-Fighters the riders are like a family to me. Spending time with all the riders is fun but mostly I love hanging out with Dany Torres and Eigo Sato was always fun to be around. Andre Villa is like my second brother – Charles and I are always spending time with Andre. This year I also made some great new friends like Taka Higashino and Josh Sheenan."

**DBR:** The level of FMX is increasing so quickly. What do you think about that? Will there be a limit?

**TP:** "I don't think there is a limit in freestyle motocross – the bikes are better and the events are better. Look at how the BMX world is growing and changing day by day – we should take inspiration from them. In the seven years that I have been riding FMX every day I think of new tricks and so are all the other top riders – you can see that during the events. For example, Travis Pastrana was ahead of everyone else in FMX. We can all remember the double backflip that changed the level in FMX but he is still working on new tricks! We saw that during the last X Games with the 720 and now it's time for us to do some new tricks!"

"When I nail a new trick I immediately think

'what is the next one?'. When I did the flair there was already the one-handed flair in my mind. I made that in Sydney so, for sure, there will be other combos."

**DBR:** What do you think about Kyle Loza and the fact that all he works on during the year is preparation for the Best Trick competition in the X Games?

**TP:** "Kyle Loza you either like or you don't. He did a lot of new tricks but if you look back at videos of Travis Pastrana from about 2005 there were all these new tricks that he was working on. The Volt and The Flair both come from Travis Pastrana as well as the double backflip, 360 and 720. Travis Pastrana, for me, is the man in FMX."

"If Kyle Loza loves to concentrate on the Best Trick for the X Games then I respect him for that but he is different from me – I'm someone who loves to ride at big events like Nate Adams or Robbie Maddison. They love to ride every time, every place – not just one time."

**DBR:** What about ESPN deciding to end the Best Trick contest at X Games – was that the right thing to do?

**TP:** "I don't know why they stopped it. It was definitely a dangerous event but people loved >>>





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it and almost every new trick came out because of it. Some riders were practising all year only for that event. The X Games loved the Best Trick contest until recently. I think they got scared of the evolution of the sport but FMX will keep going even without that Best Trick contest."

**DBR:** To go back to what you were saying about the BMX scene, Mike Metzger always said that the future of FMX bikes will be similar to BMX. What do you think?

**TP:** "I think it's a good idea because we need power to jump on the ramps and do big jumps but the motorbikes are too heavy. If the bikes are made lighter they will be easier for everyone to use – the body and the bike would be more equal, more balanced. For example my body is small for a 450 while riders like Andre Villa and Travis Pastrana are bigger and taller so they can do what they want with the motorbike."

**DBR:** How do your family feel about FMX?

**TP:** "When Charles and I were young our passion was to jump our BMX bikes in our backyard and step-by-step we started to ride motocross and then freestyle motocross. We've always had the support of our parents. They don't really follow the FMX scene or come to many events but they know that we are happy living in Hossegor and our jobs are our lives – they are happy!"

**DBR:** Did their attitude change after Charles' crash?

**TP:** "They said 'take care guys and be safe' more often but the show must go on! Also, they know that we train every day, we don't go to sleep late, we don't drink or party before an event – we take what we do seriously. Even though a crash happened, we must continue to work!"

**DBR:** What's the relationship like between you and your brother?

**TP:** "For the first few months of living here we were alone so we were together all the time. Even now we're still together every day so my brother is part of me. He is part of my life. If you're on your own you need to find the power and focus from yourself and sometimes that's pretty hard but if there are two of you it's different. It's better having someone there with you. From the morning to the evening, we stay



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*Great extension and loads of style always make Tom a favourite with the crowd*

together and before we go to the FMX park for training we speak about new tricks and how we can do them. All day long we speak about freestyle motocross because we love our sport, we love our life and hope to continue with it for a long time."

**DBR:** Some European FMX riders have decided to move to the USA for training. Would you?

**TP:** "We moved to Hossegor some years ago because Manu Troux was here. We decided then that the best place for our careers was here. I love living in France because the people are great, the food is good and I've a lot of friends here. I've got a lot of events in Europe, our manager is here and I would also need to buy another house there, to build a new park and a new foam pit. I prefer to travel to the USA just for the X Games at the moment. One event isn't enough to live there for."

**DBR:** Away from FMX what are your hobbies?

**TP:** "I don't have a lot of free time for hobbies but during spring I ride a road bike on a circuit with friends and during last winter I went to ride

sand races like Le Touquet. Aside from that, I try to spend all my time on my motorbike – or working on it."

**DBR:** Do you have any tattoos?

**TP:** "No."

**DBR:** Why not?

**TP:** "I'm scared – it's not for me!"

**DBR:** When you travel around the world what do you miss most?

**TP:** "That's easy... it's my foam pit! Because I don't have a girlfriend or family at home waiting for me and my brother and my friends are with me at events the only thing in my life I miss is the FMX park!"

**DBR:** What does the future hold for you?

**TP:** "I hope to continue to ride like this – to push harder, keep training and learning new tricks. I want to win a medal in the X Games – gold is best and I need to work towards that. I don't know what I'll do after FMX – that question is too hard."





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t's every young racer's dream to chase glory on the world stage, riding for a factory power house and ultimately sleeping well at night knowing that there's no problem paying the bills every month – all boxes that Shaun Simpson ticked off years ago.

Unfortunately for the 25 year old a couple of serious injuries while in the prime of his career saw his career hiccup slightly but after a stellar '12 season – where he finished 11th in a stacked MX1 GP class – things are starting to come back around for Simo. So much so that 2013 sees him jamming once again with a factory gig.

This time though it is with the unassuming efforts of TM, a company that portrays a real 'family feel' to their brand and one that couldn't suit Shaun – and the Simpsons – better. So I went about finding out what he thinks about his current employer, how he sees the state of motocross and what he sees being beyond it...

**DBR:** Your season so far, hit me with it in a brief summary of how you think it's been going?

**SS:** "My season so far has been not as impressive as I had wanted or expected. At the moment the MX1 class is extremely competitive but coming into the season I felt like I had the tools to run top 10 this year and I still do. I competed in the early Italian championship where three of the races didn't go well – we had quite a bit of bike bother and some set-up issues which cost us time, results and ultimately a bit of confidence but it was good training against some top riders.

"The start to the GPs was great in Qatar where I got an eighth in the opening moto and proved my pace and overall fitness was good but from there though it's been a bit ropery. A DNF in Thailand and again in Valkenswaard has cost me a lot of points in the championship so it's not been the ideal start but the pieces are there and we just need them to come together."

**DBR:** You've just had the Italian GP and although it's not your home GP it was that of the team – Ricci Racing. Bar the crash early in the second race your times were good all weekend, your pace was strong and potentially it could have been your best GP of the year so far – what do you put that down to?

**SS:** "The Italian GP had the potential to be great. Everything went well up until the second moto although I wasn't all that happy with the first moto to be honest. I can honestly say I hated the track when we rode there at the Italian championship so I wasn't looking forward to it. We had been down a week before to ride and test on some hardpack tracks to get a feel for it and we did some real good suspension testing which I would say helped a good bit.

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# 24 HEAVEN!

IRN BRY CHECKS IN WITH SHAUN SIMPSON FOR AN  
OFF-KILTER CHAT WITH THE TM FACTORY STAR...

Words by Bryan MacKenzie Photos by Ray Archer



"These aren't the droids  
you are looking for..."



"It rained and made the track super soft and rutted on Saturday – prime for any Brit – so I was loving it, putting in fast times and it felt easy. Sunday it dried up and I didn't love it as much but I was still on that little bit extra for the sponsors etc and as a rider you would love for it to be great too but as far as pressure from them though... not really."

**DBR:** Was there extra pressure from the team to do well?

**SS:** "I think there is always a little extra at a home GP to do well – even if it wasn't my home GP – but the team put on that little bit extra for the sponsors etc and as a rider you would love for it to be great too but as far as pressure from them though... not really."

**DBR:** So I should get in the customary question that I'm expected to ask... How is the TM?

**SS:** "There's no getting away from the fact that the bike looks big and bulky but when everything is correct and working well it's quite a dream to ride. I mean it packs a few extra kilos to your average 450 but the engine is strong and the power is usable – not snappy. The suspension

handles well, it turns great and I feel safe on it. All things you need from a bike to do well on it. I would just say that mechanical issues have let us down a couple of times so far which is a shame but they're just silly problems. However we need to sort them out and hopefully have no more the rest of the year."

**DBR:** I don't want to talk too much about what you've done in the past as that's old news but one thing I'm intrigued to ask about is the comparison between the factory efforts of TM compared to KTM as you have now experience of the two. The illusion I have is that KTM is this big corporate machine where even the mechanics wear a suit and tie in the workshop whereas TM are a more humble family affair and the factory is in an extension off of grandma's house. But pitting the two operations against each other, do TM have the ability to modestly compare to the KTM factory racing effort in terms of R&D, testing, budget, personnel – basically, what I'm asking is if you stamp your feet hard enough does sh\*t happen?

**SS:** "I think you've nailed the comparison

between KTM and TM there. KTM is a massive deal and they've taken over a whole town in Austria and almost everyone in the town works for KTM. For them it's all about sales, their racing team has a serious budget, great personnel at the track and at home and a desire to win.

"On the TM side it's hugely different but in a strange way they get all the same jobs done on such a smaller scale. I think the statement about an extension on grandma's house just about sums it up. The TM factory is in the middle of Pesaro, Italy. It's a tight city as it is and the factory is a labyrinth of tunnels, underground workshops, machines and people working everywhere for the same goal. Most importantly, there's passion.

"Don't get me wrong, KTM are clearly passionate about their bikes and they work hard to produce some of the best bikes out there but at some level it is just a job to a lot of people and sometimes the passion is lost.

"At TM there is much more of a handmade approach to building bikes and if you need something customised it's an easy process to make it happen. In KTM it's a much bigger



operation and more difficult to change the way they work or the parts they use. But as far as a company TM have all the facilities, budget albeit on a different scale but proportional to the effort. For example KTM have four factory riders, three supported factory riders and sell a load of bikes but TM have two factory riders and sell less bikes but its proportional.

"TM know how to build bikes and engines and they are at the top of supermoto, enduro and karting. Motocross is maybe one area that they need to focus on a bit more to reach that same level and but I believe they can – they've been there in the past with 125 riders."

**DBR:** Good job dropping the word labyrinth in there. I don't think I've ever used that in context in my entire life – maybe only to talk about the rapper. You sound pretty happy with everything and maybe you can be that guy to start the resurgence of TM. You've been around a long time and your career has been pretty well documented. How many interviews or magazine/web features would you guestimate that you've done in your, what, 10 years as a pro?

*The opening moto of the year in Qatar has been Shaun's best result so far...*

**SS:** "I would say I turned pro at 16 – left school, done the British championship and three GPs that year. I can only guestimate that I could do maybe 10-15 magazine/web features each year so let's say 100-150 in total. A fair few when you think about it like that!"

**DBR:** Oh well in that case let's ditch the script and freestyle this son-of-a-bitch because you've already had so much publicity in your career if people couldn't score over 80 per cent in a Shaun Simpson pub quiz then they're either too young to drink – in which case their favourite rider will be Ken Roczen anyway – or don't sprechen sie englisch. The rest of us should know you pretty well by now. Let's look for some new stuff... You live in Belgium right? How long have you been doing that for?

**SS:** "We left home when I was 17 and we took an opportunity to go and do GPs. We thought it could be a once in a lifetime chance so in 2005 we started the season at the second GP in Spain – since then it's been normal to be away from home. In 2005 and 2006 we stayed in the truck and had no base so would just pitch up in a parking area or a campsite and prep the bike

for the weekend. After that in '07 we based ourselves in Belgium and in 2008 we moved to Holland to be close to our engine tuner which turned out to be the smartest move we ever made.

"Then when I signed for factory KTM I just needed a place to stay as all the practice bike etc was taken care of so I got an apartment in Zolder, Belgium where I stayed for two years and now I'm in my third year in a house that I rent in Overpelt which is close to Lommel. It's okay – it's more about being central in Europe for travel purposes and being close to the tracks – but I do miss home in Scotland more and more every year. I wish I could live there but it's just too damn far away!"

**DBR:** You must be able to speak Belgian by now and probably prefer mayonnaise with your chips rather than brown sauce?

**SS:** "I would say I can get by talking Flemish now, it's not perfect but I can understand 90 per cent of what's being said which can be useful. I was never much of a brown sauce man anyway so it's red sauce, curry sauce or mayonnaise for me – I'm not that fussy."

**DBR:** I believe you have a chick from back home – how does that work out for you doing the long distance thing?

**SS:** "My girlfriend is great. She understands what I do even though she hadn't heard of motocross before we started going out. I used to go to school with her and we just met up and things went from there. She's a real smart cookie and finished university last year after graduating in law and then took part of the summer off to come with me for a couple of months but we decided that she should work on a career for herself and we would have to just work at our relationship long distance. It's tough though, she works in Aberdeen now and I'm in Belgium so a shed load of texts, calls, Skype and FaceTime are required. I'm sure it's a smart move for the future though."

>>





**DBR:** Your dad owns a car garage at the family home in Scotland and I can imagine you were a grease monkey in there while growing up. I think I've broken an engine mount on my van, could you take a look at it?

**SS:** "Yeah dad's garage at home... There's plenty grease and burst oil in that place and I miss it sometimes – we could do anything in there. You name it and we could do it. I used to work with him when I left school and in between races and GPs we would get some work booked in to pay some bills. I would say because of that experience I'm a very mechanical rider and I enjoy it. I mean a lot of the guys these days couldn't even change a wheel or adjust the chain correctly but I have been brought up with it and have been working on bikes and cars since I can remember. So I would have no problem changing your engine mount."

**DBR:** What if I needed a new gearbox?

**SS:** "As long as you gave me a lift in with your new gearbox I could get that done too. I would have to dig out and get my boiler suit on though."

**DBR:** So would taking the family garage to new heights once your riding career is over and retiring back in Gauldry be on the cards or do you see yourself staying in Belgium and trying to keep work in the sport or will you retire on all the money you've made chasing the dream?

**SS:** "I think after motocross there will be no staying in Belgium. I would love to come back home to Scotland and continue in the sport with training or coaching or even still going to GPs. I'm really in to the training side of things and the older I get the more things I learn and I would love to be able to help put that knowledge back in to the sport one day. I doubt getting back in to the garage will be on the cards although my dad will probably get me roped in somehow."

**DBR:** Let me ask you a little bit about money if you don't mind. People will assume that being a pro of 10 years, racing on the GP scene and winning GPs, international and home races, riding for factory and factory supported teams and pretty much being a shredder for years that you'd sleep a foot from the ceiling upon all your loot. But knowing you as I do I can vouch that you're not a flash dude with cars for each day of the week or dripping with unnecessary 'bling' but have likely invested some back into your own career. Would that be right or have you invested your money for the future or is the fantasy that motocrossers are well paid exactly that – a fantasy?

**SS:** "Money is a sore point in motocross I guess. I hardly earned a penny until I done good in 2008 so there was three years where it was shoestring budget. I went to the factory team in 2009 and 2010 and I was quite well paid there but I did reinvest it in to my career by buying a camper and renting an apartment which all racks up the costs."

"I mean people can look at a top motocross rider and think that we have made it, that we make obscene amounts of money but the fact is that unless your top five or winning then the money drops off quite fast and the cost of doing GPs is not cheap. We have to pay for most of our expenses – flights, hotels, flyaway GPs etc. So after a full season of riding, renting a place in Belgium, travel costs, food, this and that, there is not a great deal to put in to the pension fund."

"I'm lucky to have a few great personal sponsors that help me out. It's a tough area to get your head around but I'm not here for the money or the 'bling' and nice cars don't interest me. I do it because I believe I have what it takes to reach the top and I want to show myself I can achieve that."

**DBR:** Okay so you live in Belgium and you're

there for one reason – to race motocross. But sometimes too much focus and time thinking about stuff can have an adverse effect so what does a British guy who's living in a foreign land and only speaks certain amounts of the lingo do to get away from the stresses of hunting glory?

**SS:** "Great question and the answer to that isn't an easy one. It's probably one of my weakest points to be honest. Living in Belgium is great but living with my dad who eats, sleeps and talks probably more motocross than I do means it's tough to get away from it. We sometimes talk things over for hours driving back up the road or analyse things over and over but sometimes it is just nice to have a break. I try to get out and do things with the little friends I have in Belgium just to get away from it all or when my girlfriend is over it's good because we can do things together which gets my mind off it. It sounds a lonely life but a motocross career is short and

you only get one real shot at it. I would rather give it my best now than look back on it in 10 years and say I wish I had gave it a bit more..."

**DBR:** On that note and seeing as you love it so much lets get back to motocross. I know what it's like being in a race and having guys that you just hate getting beat by. They're good enough to trade results with you on any given day but it frustrates you to hell to be beaten by them – who is that for you this year?

**SS:** "I couldn't really put a name on one guy at the moment because in MX1 there are so many guys that you battle with week in, week out. But guys like Leok, Boog, Goncalves, Guarneri, Van Horebeek, Roelants etc."

**DBR:** I don't expect you to drop a name but is there anyone on the line just now that you hold a slight grudge against and just don't like – maybe







*The factory TM motor  
has plenty of poke*

you owe somebody one already this early in the year or an old rivalry that's run for years?

**SS:** "Yes I guess there are a couple of guys that I could hold a slight grudge against but it's not worth wasting time and energy thinking about it too much. I guess they're good enough at what they do to get to where they are too so I just focus on myself. There is no better feeling than just beating them straight up – no dirty riding, no taking out, just pass and go."

"One thing I don't like though – going back to the money thing – is riders who ride inside the top 10 and even the top five bringing huge sponsorship money to teams! When teams can get a rider in the top 10 to bring money that really isn't doing the sport any good because why would they then want to pay a rider riding in the top 10 that isn't bringing money? That's hurting the sport and mostly hurting riders like myself. It's less than ideal. Rant over!"



*Simpson wanted so much  
more at the team's home  
GP but it just wasn't to be*





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# PEDAL PUSHERS!

HOW ONE BICYCLE BRAND — SPECIALIZED — ARE WORKING  
HARD TO SET THE MARK IN OFF-ROAD MOTORSPORTS...

Words by **Adam Wheeler** Photos by **Ray Archer**

**I**t is difficult just to stroll around the HQ of Specialized in Morgan Hill south of San Francisco. In fact it is easier to walk through and gawp. This is one of those cutting-edge American firms that you often read about in magazines. A complex with the kind of design and interior that reflects the sharp image and angles of their products with an array of features that form a mini community — the in-house gym and treatment room, racks of thousands and thousands of pounds worth of bicycles for employees to use, a full-on diner for a canteen, a cyclo-cross track outside in the car park and staff ride-outs each lunchtime.

Why is DBR here? We've come to find out a little more about the company that is becoming more and more synonymous with famous motorsport athletes around the world. It is hard to ignore tweets and Facebook pictures from the likes of Ryan Villopoto, Chad Reed, Tony Cairoli, David Philippaerts, Adam Cianciarulo, James Stewart and MotoGP racers like Nicky Hayden, Cal Crutchlow and former champion Casey Stoner in lycra and swapping petrol for sweat. Or at least posing with a latest carbon composite delivery that ironically costs more than a production model of the motorcycle they throw about for a living.

It doesn't require a brain surgeon to realise that cycling has become a massive part of a motorcycle racer's preparation and training programmes in the last 20 years. Whether on the side of a mountain or racking up the miles along the asphalt and dodging cars, cycling as a means of sport and leisure has increased in profile since the 1980s and the massive boom through BMX.

The pushbike has progressed beyond the point of being a means of transportation and in the UK specifically it is easy to see the impact that the likes of Chris Hoy, Shanaze Reade and Bradley Wiggins and the Olympic games on the whole have had in recent years. It can be simpler than that. Whereas a visit to Halfords or a bicycle shop two decades ago would have shown bike technology to be fairly rudimentary the latest two wheel models are now marvels of construction, material weave and a mass of components from a full suspension system to disc brakes. Most of these beasts come with a hefty price tag to match and this evolution would only

have occurred if there was a market for it.

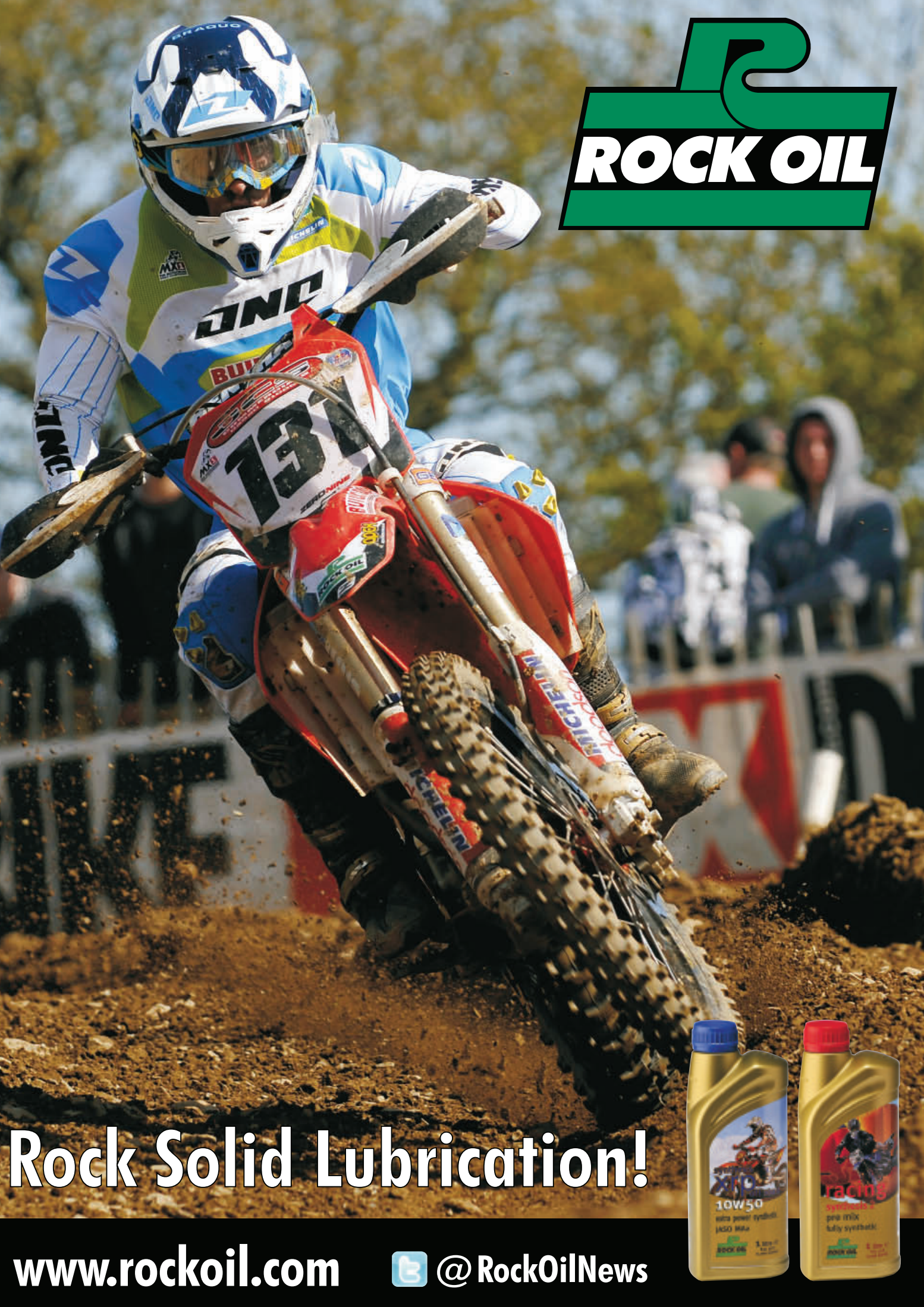
Back to racing though and Specialized hold a particular focus because they are the current 'big dogs' of those trying to make a link with motorsports. They are not the first though. Alpinestars had their own bicycle line for a while in the mid 1990s and a company like Scott have a crossover with their vast cycling profile and motocross range. While brands like Diamondback and Mongoose kicked-in with the whole BMX craze during the '80s and '90s it was still unusual to see a clear presence of a company in top flight motocross or motorcycle racing paddocks until Specialized cranked up their efforts in the past five years.

In many ways it is a good fit and makes you wonder why no other firm has seriously attacked the sport before. The riders get a cutting edge training utensil and for a company like Specialized aligning themselves with the profiles of someone like Carmichael or Villopoto has its obvious plus points. Although Global PR Manager Sean Estes believes the forging of relationships and the invasion of motorsports did not begin with a clear commercial direction.

"It started very organically but it has definitely grown to the point where we have seen the marketing value," he says. "Over the last 10 to 15 years these motorsports athletes have been drawn towards cycling as a training tool and it ties directly into what they do. Guys like Aldon Baker [renowned trainer who has worked with Carmichael, Stewart, Townley and Villopoto] and some of the more prominent trainers have brought it to the forefront. As the guys have become more aware of cycling the next generations have come through and taken it onboard also so it has become accepted as one of the main training methods.

"I reckon O'Mara [Johnny] and Hannah [Bob] were the first of the top guys to really start to use bicycles for training and part of their supercross prep but I know that Johnny has been racing mountain bikes for years now and is still winning cross country titles for his age group," he adds. "Ricky Carmichael was one of the first to take it on seriously and make the connection with us. He was training with Aldon who is a former pro mountain biker and approached us and the relationship began. The link was soon made with the Hayden brothers and then Chad Reed around the same time. James Stewart came onboard and it started growing. We have a high level >>





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of respect and admiration for what they do and it turns out that these elite guys are fans of our brand and what we do. It started as a friendship but has grown and there is a decent marketing component involved. It's not the tail wagging the dog though, it's the other way around."

"I didn't really train much with bicycles before but for the last two years I am doing much more," says four times MX1 world champion Tony Cairoli. "I'm still not really a 'super' cycling guy but I do it more often now. Specialized have the best products and it was nice to make a collaboration. I use the road bike more – I get dirty enough on the track as it is!"

"I think the bicycle and some good running shoes are the two most important things you need away from the motocross bike," claims 2008 MX1 world champion David Philippaerts. "A large part of my training is split 50-50 between bicycle and running."

So with the progression of the penny farthing becoming more prominent in motorsports why are we being shown around the Specialized facility and not another brand? "A large handful

of people here at Morgan Hill are into motorsports," says Estes, identifying one of the key reasons. "They ride dirt bikes and we reserve tracks and have track days. Even stuff like karting. Up near the airport we have one of the largest indoor circuits in America – we just love motorsports."

We are shown around the building that also houses a fully working 'shop'. A section mocked-up to show all the products and full range of Specialized's output. It is like entering a candy store for a cycling fan with a sweet tooth. Estes explains that the set-up is used as a presentation and launch area and hub for other activities where employees and people like the media can gather.

It is located below a fully kitted out gym that boasts more equipment than your local Fitness First, a full shower and locker room and even a measurement and physio suite where riders can enter and be measured for their prime riding stance and positioning. We don't get access to the R&D area that has been suitably painted-up as a fenced 'off limit' zone but we're able to

choose from a myriad of food, nibbles and drinks from the fully stock restaurant/coffee shop/chill out area. Specialized is either an awesome place to work or – if you are being cynical – a base where the employees never have to leave!

Near the rear of the building is the shipping and warehouse area and a zone all the company bikes are shelved. It is incredibly tempting to go for a spin on one of these juicy looking contraptions. The quality and design of the bikes themselves are a large part of why non-cycling athletes are drawn to the brand. "It was easy to feel the difference over my previous mountain bike with the downhills and uphill and it was a surprise to me that bicycles can have different handling, just like motocross bikes," says Philippaerts. "I like the Specialized bike because of the riding position and the materials. For two years now I have been using the same bike over and over and have never had a problem or needed to change anything."

"Specialized have the best products," adds Cairoli. "I didn't know there were so many



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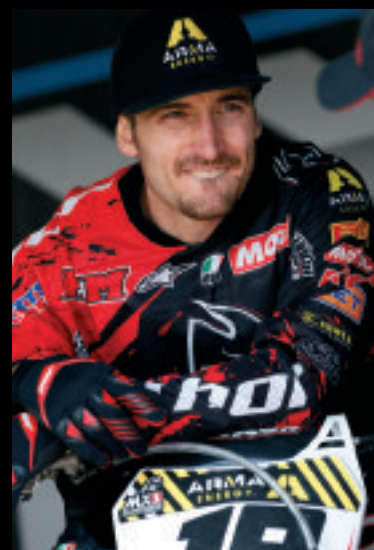
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motocrossers and motorsport people using the brand but the important reason for me was that I could see there are people at Specialized who are very passionate about motocross."

With a set-up primed to offer athletes what they need Specialized naturally looked to see what benefits they could gain, and how a difference could be made in another, loosely related, sporting discipline. "Specialized was maybe a slightly fresh face in motorsports and for sure those relationships with the top athletes help steer perceptions of how people look at us," claims Estes. "Nowadays with social media and web analytics you can quantify so much stuff. Whereas before you had to look and judge if something was working, now you can make a video – like the one we did recently with Ryan Villopoto – put it on YouTube and see exactly what kind of reach and impression-hit we're getting. Not to mention people talking about it or the other media outlets that picked it up and shared it."

Estes says the associations with major racing names are agreed on a case-by-case basis. "Say we were a motocross endemic company and there were 15 other brands



competing for that one athlete then the amount of salary, product and support structure would be the parameters you'd have to work within. Our situation is a bit different. It is very organic."

With a stable of motorsport glitterati the formula is obviously functioning and the presence of the next generation with people like Adam Cianciarulo means that Specialized is aiming to stay as the most recognisable bicycle firm in the racing field. "We were lucky that our presence started very naturally and some people [other cycling companies] now are trying to establish links but at the same time are asking themselves 'why'? If that question remains for them then it will not be so easy to succeed. With us it wasn't about marketing success to begin with, we just entered into it without a business angle but once we saw that it made sense and brought benefits on the marketing side. We keep looking around, observing and evaluating and

searching for opportunities."

The priority towards 'motors between the wheels' though has to be carefully managed. It clearly isn't a whim to be dishing out valuable product left, right and centre even though several hours around the Morgan Hill monolith to cycling and innovation wouldn't convince anyone that a financial crisis was still shackling many lives outside the walls.

"You don't want to veer too far off into one direction – like motorsports – and lose sight of other goals," adds Estes. The motorsports programme can only happen because it is contingent on other roles. The team works together to make the motorsports thing happen because it is 'off the record' per se, it exists and is real but is not quite quantified on paper in a specific department in our business but we do it because we are succeeding in what we need to do every day. With hard work comes the bit of fun and in this case the fun happens to bring a great return for the company."





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# TURNER PRIDE!

STR KTM TEAM-MATES ADAM STERRY AND JONATHAN BARRAGAN SQUARE UP...

INTERVIEW BY JP O'CONNELL PHOTO BY RAY ARCHER

**DBR:** Who would you like to play you in a film of your life?

**JB:** "Myself!"

**AS:** "Brad Pitt."

**DBR:** When did you last clean an air filter?

**JB:** "Only yesterday."

**AS:** "It's that long ago I can't even remember!"

**DBR:** What was the last lie that you told and who was it to?

**JB:** "I don't do it much – I can't even remember right now."

**AS:** "To my mechanic. I told him I had seventh fastest lap time in the world on MX vs ATV Reflex."

**DBR:** Could you check your own valve clearances?

**JB:** "Yes I could, my father taught me all about mechanics."

**AS:** "Nope."

**DBR:** Something you eat that you know you shouldn't?

**JB:** "Candy and sweets."

**AS:** "It would have to be biscuits or cookies."

**DBR:** You're in second and on the leader's rear wheel – do you take him out on the last corner for the win?

**JB:** "It's now or never so it's time to push it!"

**AS:** "If I could make the pass clean then I would but if not then it would have to be the takeout!"

**DBR:** Do you own a pair of pyjamas and if so what style are you running?

**JB:** "Nope, I don't do pyjamas!"

**AS:** "Yeah of course they range from Calvin Klein to Where's Wally!"

**DBR:** What's been the highlight of your career so far?

**JB:** "Whenever I have been on the top step of the podium!"

**AS:** "I have had quite a lot of success so it's quite hard to pick one."

**DBR:** What car do you drive?

**JB:** "A Mercedes Sprinter van."

**AS:** "I wish I could drive but unfortunately I'm only 16."

**DBR:** What car would you drive if money were no object?

**JB:** "I have to say that I prefer bikes to cars."

**AS:** "Some tricked out Tundra like Roczen's."

**DBR:** Have you ever blamed a poor result on a non-existent mechanical issue?

**JB:** "No never."

**AS:** "No never! If I've ridden badly I will say so."

**DBR:** If you could change anything about yourself what would it be?

**JB:** "To be a little less stubborn."

**AS:** "I need to stop growing as I don't want to go on a 450 just yet."

**DBR:** If you could meet any person – dead or alive – who would it be?

**JB:** "My grandmother and grandfather."

**AS:** "It has to be the G.O.A.T Ricky Carmichael."

**DBR:** If you could have any superpower for a week what would it be?

**JB:** "I would like to be able to end the injustice and hunger throughout the world."

**AS:** "To be able to fly as getting places would be much easier."

**DBR:** If you were shipwrecked on an Island, what three things would you want with you?

**JB:** "A dirt bike, gas and a girl!"

**AS:** "My dirt bike, fuel and a Bobcat to build some jumps."

**DBR:** What's been the most embarrassing thing you've done while drunk?

**JB:** "I never drink."

**AS:** "Drunk? What's that?"

**DBR:** What's your most prized possession?

**JB:** "Definitely my family."

**AS:** "Probably my dirt bike!"

**DBR:** Favourite race you've ever been in?

**JB:** "The 2008 GP of Lommel – I loved that race!"

**AS:** "I have a couple but the first race at the first round of the Maxxis this year was the best I've felt racing ever."

**DBR:** Be honest, how often do you Google yourself?

**JB:** "Honestly... always!"

**AS:** "Not that often. I only do it to look for photos after a race."

**DBR:** Blonde or brunette?

**JB:** "Blonde, brunette and redhead please!"

**AS:** "I'm not too bothered! I'm keeping my options open so if anyone is interested you know where to find me."

**DBR:** Is winning a race better than sex?

**JB:** "Probably yes!"

**AS:** "Winning your first Maxxis race has got to be! Maybe I will find out sometime!"

**DBR:** One thing about your riding style that you would have liked to improve?

**JB:** "In 2013 it's definitely my starts."

**AS:** "I would like to be able to sit forward more in the turns which is what we're working on."

**DBR:** What's your favourite film?

**JB:** "The Godfather."

**AS:** "It has to be Taken."

**DBR:** What's your most annoying habit?

**JB:** "Hmmm, I can't really think of one although I'm sure others could."

**AS:** "I have a habit of checking my fuel cap is on tight and I mean tight."



DESCRIPTION SIGNALEMENT

Beater	Titulaire	★Wife	Femme
Occupation	GRAPHIC DESIGNER		
Place of birth	BELLINGHAM		
Place of birth	BELLINGHAM		
Date of birth	9/2/47		
Date of birth	9/2/47		
Country of Residence	ENGLAND		
Country of Residence	ENGLAND		

Visual signature of bearer  
Signature du titulaire

Jack Burnicle

Visual signature of wife  
Signature de sa femme

(S337915)

Jack Burnicle is the godfather (our words, not his) of British MX Journalism. Born in Bellingham, County Durham, to Bella and nutty (his words, not ours) musical genius Stan Burnicle, Jack was mad about cars and motor racing as a kid.

At sweet 16 he got a motorbike, rode it to a local 'scramble' and was instantly, hopelessly hooked.

Next time he went he was armed with his mum's Kodak Brownie camera.

After art college he mixed life as a graphic designer, magazine art director, photographer and part-time art college tutor with motocross and photo-journalism.

Now he's a commentator, painting pictures with words. He never did get a proper job...





# FLYIN' FINNS!

BACK IN THE DAY FINLAND WAS INFAMOUS FOR ITS FRIGHTENINGLY FAST MOTOCROSS RACERS...

Words and photos by Jack Burnicle

**L**ast December the Finnish Federation celebrated its 90th anniversary with a lavish banquet in Helsinki and invited all their surviving world champions. With a population of barely five million, Finland boasts more two-wheeled world-beaters per capita than any other country – an impressive 17 in total. Of these, their only road racing king, Jarno Saarinen, died in a multiple pile-up at Monza in 1973 and four-time enduro champion Mika Ahola passed away last year. But all the others were there except for their famously alcoholic original enduro superstar Kari Tiainen! Road racer Teppi Lansivouri, who finished second to Barry Sheene in the 1976 500GPs, received a lifetime achievement award and the whole shebang was overseen by the president of the 'Finnish ACU', former factory motocross star Kurt Ljungqvist.

All this makes it gloriously apposite that the Baltic state should finally be awarded a motocross grand prix this season for the first time in over a decade, having previously hosted them solidly for almost 40 years. During that time Finnish flyers featured prominently on the global MX scene, though their number faded sharply as they became an enduro powerhouse. Finland's only world trials champion and a guest at the dinner, Apico boss Yjö Vesterinen

reckons this is simply because young Finns, like their peers in the UK, follow trends. "Whatever is the 'in thing', the kids do that," explains Vesty. "And in Finland, for a number of years, that has been enduro. They all play ice hockey and ride enduro.

Once upon a time it was trials but now next to nothing is happening there..."

The first ever Finnish motocross grand prix took place in 1962 – the inaugural season of 250cc world championships – at their most famous circuit, Ruskeasanta, just outside Helsinki and was won by a homeboy, Aarno Erola on a Husqvarna. Six years later Ruskeasanta had launched a long-lasting, successful series of 500GPs, Hyvinkaa had taken over the 250s and another famous beer-swiller, Kalevi Vehkonen, won on a Husky.

Finns always flourished in sand and their tracks tended to be wide, whooping freeways through tall fir trees. Kalevi would go on to achieve acclaim with Montesa and win the 1971 Polish grand prix but by then an ice-blue eyed, bearded Viking had hit the scene. Heikki Mikkola actually hailed from Hyvinkaa and would become the most famous and successful Finnish motocrosser. He won two 250cc GPs in 1970, in Austria and Wohlen, Switzerland and the 1971 round at Beuern, in Germany, to prove his versatility on slick hard-pack tracks.

He then moved into 500GPs and began a fabled six-year confrontation with reigning champion Roger De Coster (Suzuki). Heikki won his first 500 rounds in Czecho and Payerne (Switzerland again!) in 1972 before toppling De Coster in a titanic 1974 season. They duelled again in 1975, De Coster gifted the title lead at Hawkstone Park when 30th birthday boy Mikkola's Husky choked with dust half-way up the hill as he led the second moto into its final lap.

Heikki subsequently headed back into

>>

PEKKA VEHKONEN,  
STILL FULL-ON AT THE  
1992 FINISH 250 GP



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250s and won an incredible 1976 world crown by a single point from Russian rival Gennady Moiseev (KTM) to become the first man to win 250 and 500cc world championships. Hired by Yamaha to spearhead their inaugural 500GP assault Mikkola won back-to-back titles in 1977 and '78 before injury and the onslaught of youthful interlopers ended his racing in 1979.

His 32 grand prix victories included five Italian rounds from 1974 through 1979 (interrupted only by de Coster when Heikki was absent racing 250s) and double wins at both Namur and Carlsbad, California in '77 and '78! He stayed with Yamaha and masterminded their back-to-back 250 world titles as team manager to Neil Hudson and Danny LaPorte in 1981 and 1982.

Worshipped in the States Mikkola wasn't the only Finn flying the blue cross in the seventies. His mate Pauli Pippola (sometimes using Heikki's spare 250!) was a zesty, happy-go-lucky performer in 125 and 250 GPs. Pippola's career best result was a remarkable third overall in the 1978 US 125GP at Lexington, Ohio behind Broc Glover (Yamaha) and he would eventually move on to become European Snowmobile champion!

Among his 125 rivals were a couple of contrastingly dour hard men from Finland. Matti Autio, a crouching, determined Suzuki rider, finished fifth in the 1978 125 world championship. He improved to fourth in 1979 behind world champions Harry Everts, Akira Watanabe and Gaston Rahier, mounting the rostrum at Slane, just outside Dublin, though Autio's greatest day came in 1980 when he won the first moto of his home grand prix at Salo ahead of Everts! His equally stern pal Gote Liljegen rode a KTM to eighth place in the 1976 125GPs placing second to Rahier in Finland. Seventh in 1978 earned Gote a factory Aprilia ride alongside Corrado Maddai for 1979 when he finished the season 10th overall.

Meanwhile in the 250 class an equally rugged blonde Finn had emerged. Sporting a radically broken nose and the convincing appearance of a boxer, Erkki Sundstrom thrust his Husqvarna to third place in the last 250GP moto of 1978 at Leningrad, in Russia. 14th in 1979, Erkki improved to eighth in 1980, two places ahead of a sweet shy man called Matti Tarkkonen who switched from Husqvarna to Yamaha mid-season and soared to second overall in Finland's penultimate round behind sand maestro Kees van der Ven. Matti had a beautiful, amply proportioned wife, Siirpa, whose warm personality lit up the 250GP paddock and who ultimately became the only ever female MX des Nations team manager!

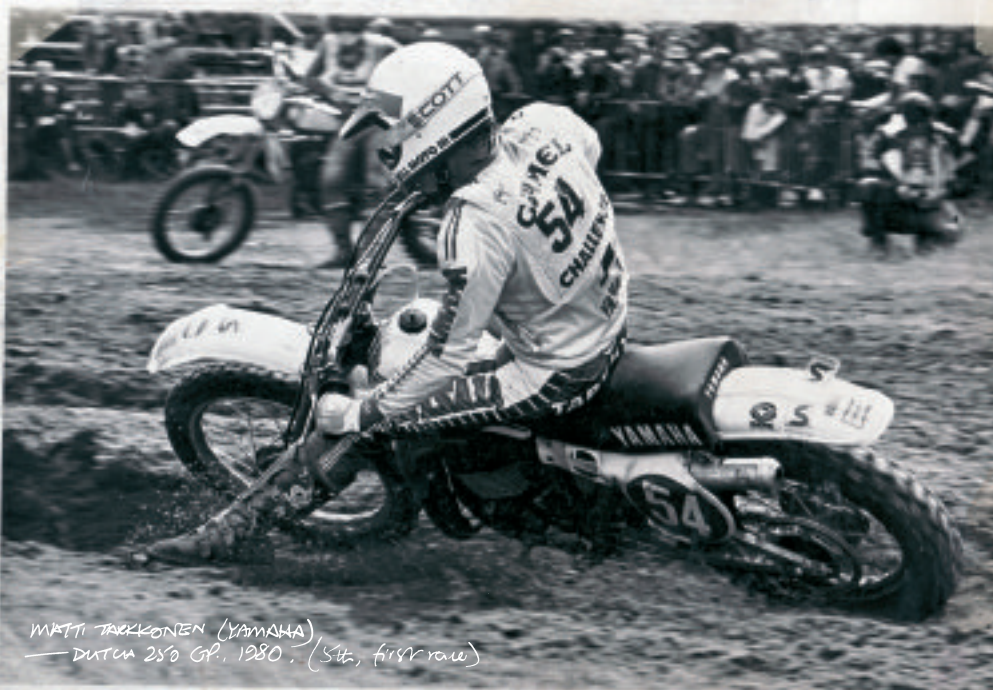
Simultaneously, in Mikkola's wake, a hard-charging Honda privateer called Tapani Pikkarainen surfaced on the 500 scene. An absolute sandfly, Tapani registered his best result of the season at Valkenswaard on his way to 11th in the world and would eventually win his only grand prix on home soil at Ruskeasanta in 1983, ahead of title fighters Hakan Carlqvist and Andre Malherbe!

In the French quagmire of 1981's opening 250GP Tarkkonen steered his Yamaha to third place behind Georges Jobe and ended the year tenth in the table after riding shotgun for Yamaha's champion elect Neil Hudson at a thrilling final round in Holland. Autio's race one win at Switzerland's 125GP ahead of Watanabe and Eric Geboers, and Pikkarainen's second race 500GP victory in Ruskeasanta helped both men to 11th overall in their respective championships though a dark-eyed, olive skinned kid called Juha Sintonen marked his debut with top eight placings in Sweden and France on an RM250 Suzuki.

This earned the young Finn a factory Yamaha berth alongside Carlqvist for the latter's



GRAND PRIX WINNER TAPANI PIKKARAINEN, (HONDA)  
1980 DUTCH 500 GP,  
VALKENSWAARD



MATTI TARKKONEN (YAMAHA)  
— DUTCH 250 GP, 1980, (5th, first row)

successful 1983 500 campaign. And despite Pikkarainen's famous victory at Ruskeasanta Sintonen, fourth that day, leapfrogged his compatriot to finish seventh in the championship, a point behind Andre Vromans and 13 behind Honda new boy Dave Thorpe. Juha also won an epic supercross final in the Amsterdam Olympic Stadium after an enthralling duel with Geboers' Suzuki, yet Yamaha dropped him for 1984. Sintonen responded by finishing sixth overall and first privateer in the 1984 world championships beating the factory Yams on a CR500 Honda with a series of consistent performances that belied his early reputation as a flamboyant crasher. Mind you he did lose a tennis match – to me, on a beautiful leafy court in the grounds of our Luxembourg hotel, with typically good grace!

1983 had witnessed the explosive appearance of an extrovert, floppy fair-haired 17 year-old called Pekka Vehkonen, nephew of double GP winner Kalevi. Riding a Yamaha, Pekka won his first 125GP moto in Germany then swept the Swedish Grand Prix to nail a strong fourth in the table. He later zapped to a popular victory in Europe's original and oldest surviving international supercross the 'Superbowl of Genoa', in northern Italy that December and was snapped up by Cagiva.

Vehkonen rostrumed at the opening 125GPs of 1984 in Italy and Holland before injury intervened and he missed five rounds. 14th in the table put him four places ahead of larger than life newcomer Arto Pantilla, on a KTM, while a kid called Mika Khouki scored a third place in San Marino on a Suzuki! Also, interestingly, Kari Tiainen finished seventh in the second moto of the Finnish 125GP, therefore becoming the first enduro superstar to start out as a grand prix motocrosser (think Aubert, Meo, Renet, Monni, Salvini, Seistola).

Pekka Vehkonen achieved immortality as Finland's second ever world MX champ in 1985 when he edged a blistering season-long 125GP duel with Dutchman Davey Strijbos, winning the last two rounds in Argentina and Brazil to snatch the crown by nine points.

It was a golden year for Finland – both Khouki and Pantilla ended the season inside the 125 top 10 and Tiainen scored points again in Finland! In 250GPs a burly, bustling, Husqvarna newcomer called Simo Taimi muscled his way into the reckoning, 15th overall despite missing the last four rounds.

In the 500s Sintonen struggled on an outclassed Husqvarna but another new face, polite, smiling Kurt Ljungqvist (Yamaha)





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## OLD BOY'S NETWORK!

AMCA champion turned 1980's grand prix rider Rob Meek was invited in 2011 to a youth international race in Finland with his son Ben Watson. "It was a big event and a lot of the old Flying Finns showed up," reported 'Meeky'. "Kurt Lungqvist is head of the Finnish ACU. Mika Khouki manages a range of MX shops. Arto Pantilla has a boy racing and owns plant. He built the track! Matti Tarkkonen and his wife import CTI knee braces. Pekka Vehkonen has a string of solariums in Helsinki, owns a speedboat and is big mates with F1 driver Kimi Rhaikkonen. They go trail riding and ride motocross together. And Ismo Vehkonen rode the Vets GP that weekend and finished second!"

made his mark with a top six finish in Luxembourg. Pekka Vehkonen slipped to fourth in the 1986 125GPs but it was nonetheless a vintage Finnish season with Khouki – now on a factory Yamaha – fifth, Kalevi Vehkonen's son, Pekka's cousin Ismo Vehkonen (Honda) sixth and Pantilla seventh.

Ljungqvist switched briefly to 250s and finished top 10 but moved back on to 500s in 1987 and was rewarded with a replacement ride on the new aluminium-framed water-cooled YZM500 after factory riders Leif Persson and Jacky Vimond were sidelined by injuries. He responded brilliantly, winning the first moto at Ruskeasanta and placing fourth in the series.

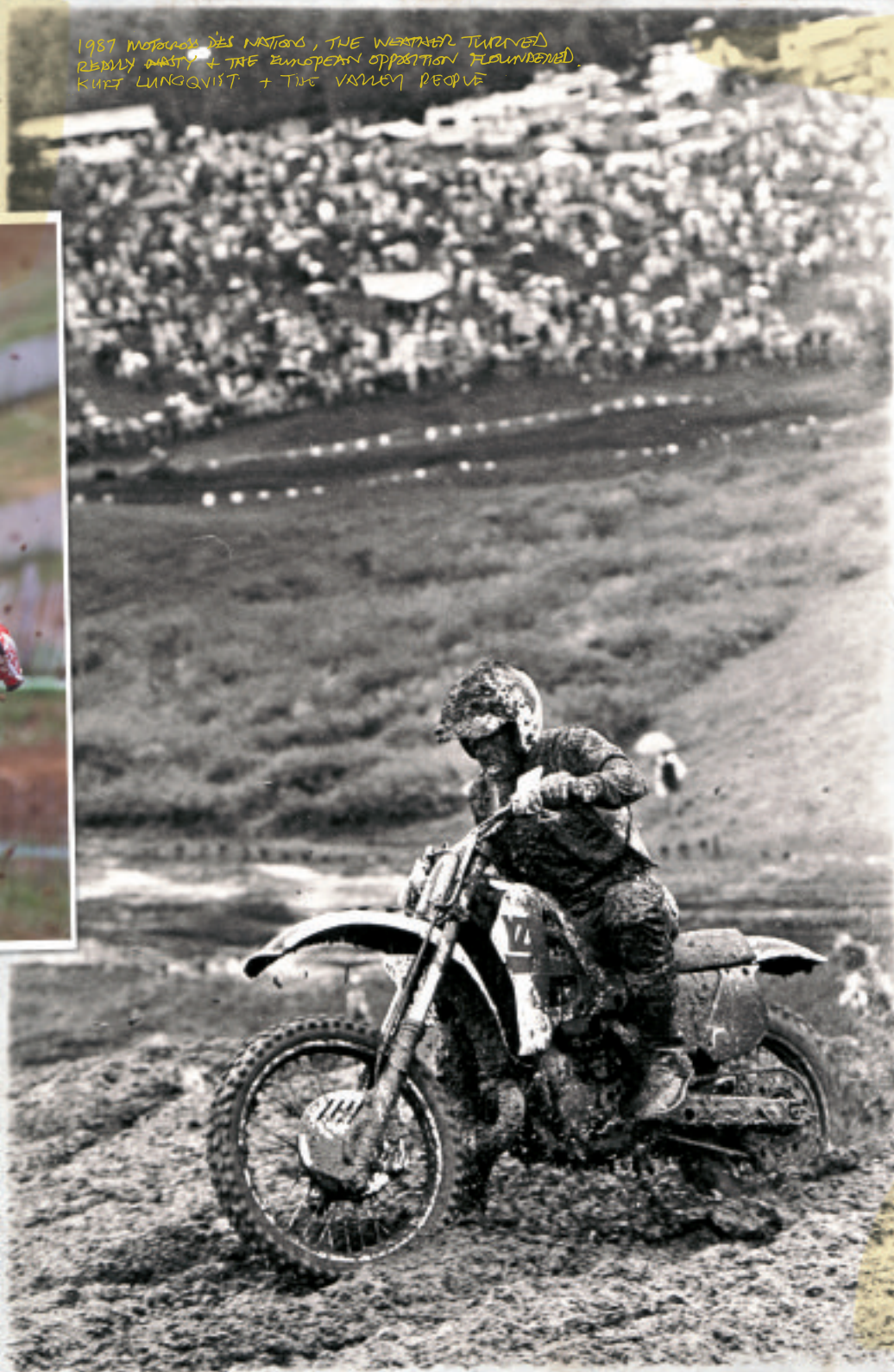
The tall, willowy Ismo Vehkonen, now on a CR500, started the series well with third overall in Spain but only survived two rounds while

cousin Pekka fought a truly memorable 250 duel with Honda's eventual champion Eric Geboers. Victorious in Belgium, San Marino and at Hawkstone Park, Vehkonen lost tiebreakers to Geboers in Holland and Czecho in what Eric described as his toughest campaign ever. This began a sequence of four successive seasons in which Pekka, cool and laid-back off the track but wild, fast, intense (and admired, among others, by Ricky Johnson) on it, finished consistently second in the 250cc world championships.

He lost out to John van den Berk in 1988 and, after joining 'Berky' back at Yamaha was beaten by Jean-Michel Bayle (Honda) in 1989 and 'Crazy Horse' Alex Puzar in 1990. Winner of five 125 and 12 250 GPs, Pekka Vehkonen also became Roger De Coster's brother-in-law when his sister married the great man!

Ljungqvist, meanwhile, joined forces with the barking mad Arto Pantilla on a private 500GP Honda team. Kurt ended the year ninth and Arto 16th. But Kari Tiainen was crowned 250cc world enduro champion and began a shift in Finnish focus that would sharply deplete their presence in motocross grand prix racing. Good pals Ljungqvist and Pantilla both finished top ten in the 1991 500GPs and Pekka Vehkonen sixth in the 250s but the 125s were suddenly drained of any Finnish participation for the first time ever and come 1992 only Pekka's 15th place in the 250 table remained. Miska Aaltonen (Honda) crept into the 250 top 20 in 1993 but the following year not a single Finn featured in any of the three MX grand prix world championships' top 30. The Golden Age of Finnish motocross had gone...

1987 MOTOCROSS DES NATIONS, THE WEATHER TURNED  
REALLY DRASTY + THE EUROPEAN OPPOSITION FLOUNDERED.  
KURT LUNGVIST + THE VARIOUS PEOPLE







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## **SLED HEAD!**

A hard-charging Husky privateer, Pauli Pippola went on to win the 1990 European Snowmobile championship. Here he is in typically vibrant action at the 1978 Swiss 125cc GP!



# MYTH BUSTERS!

## IS IT IMPOSSIBLE TO GO FASTER THAN A 450 ON A 250F? WE PUT THAT MYTH TO THE TEST...

Words by Ed Bradley Photos by Suttly

**T**he hot debate during the first couple of overseas GPs this year has been whether Jeffrey Herlings could win one of the Super Finals on his 250F or not – no pressure for the youngster there then! While Herlings – or anyone else for that matter – has failed to pull that feat off just yet surely it has to be possible for an MX2 pilot to beat the MX1 boys heads up, right? I mean, it has happened before...

In 1986 the MXdN was held at Maggiora in Italy – a hilly, hardpack circuit with some fantastic jumps littered around the circuit. In the second moto recently crowned 500cc world champion Dave Thorpe was racing his full factory HRC Honda up against Americans David Bailey and Johnny O'Mara who were both riding production based factory Hondas. Johnny O was on a little 125 screamer and while he didn't win the moto he did beat all the 500 pilots – bar Bailey – and in doing so set tongues wagging all over the world.

Now fast forward 21 years again to another MXdN... This time it's 2007 and we're at Budds Creek where a young American 250F rider called Ryan Villopoto opened a massive can of whoop ass on the world's fastest riders including Chad Reed, Ricky Carmichael as well as the GP elite who were all riding MX1 machines. His fastest lap was over three seconds quicker than the next fastest guy – which was Carmichael. How on earth he pulled this off I have no idea. Since that day nobody has done it at world level again – either in the new overseas GP Super Finals or at the MXdN.

Here in the UK there's a national championship – the Red Bull Pro Nationals – that puts the MX1 and MX2 guys together on the track at the same time although they're still scored separately. In the four years that series has been running, not once has an MX2 pilot won the moto outright – although it's been close once or twice. They also do it in the Maxxis at selected rounds now with the same results – fo-fiddys on top even when a 250F rider has yanked the holey!

And that got us thinking – are the odds really that stacked against the 250s or is it

simply a mental thing? So we devised a test and although it's not exactly perfect it's about as fair a comparison as can be made.

To help us in our quest we invited a couple of riders to come run some motos which we timed on the MX Coach App. The idea was that the riders would run a moto on one class bike and then switch to the other class bike for a second timed run. At the end of it all we'd see if one class bike was quicker than the other over the course of a moto, if one particular bike fatigued the rider or was harder to set consistent times on etc.

The first rider we lined up was HM Plant KTM UK young gun Nathan Watson. Nathan actually beat all of the 450F guys at the opening round of the British Masters at the sandy Preston docks in both motos on his 250F (which we're not counting as the MX1 line-up wasn't the best and he was also head and shoulders above all the MX2 guys on the day too). Some weeks later and Nathan also went on to score points in his debut MX1 grand prix in Holland. The kid is hauling ass on both MX1 and MX2 motorcycles at the moment so we thought he'd be a good guy to help us with our quest to find out which bike is faster to ride – the 250F or the 450.

Joining Nathan is Matt Moffat. Matt's a regular top-15 runner in the Maxxis MX1 class on his 450 KTM – on which he also scored points with at Valkenswaard's MX3 GP – but at the Red Bull Pro Nationals he runs in the MX2 class on a 250cc two-stroke which adds another twist to it all. He's brought his 250 two-stroke while Nathan came with a more or less standard 250F and 450F. These two riders can rip around Doncaster Moto Parc at high speed and have the ability to ride different capacity bikes very well indeed so were ideal for the purposes of this test.

So this is what we did. We let the lads have a warm-up on the track and get their lines dialled in. Then we ran 'moto one' which was Nathan on the 250F and Matt on the 450. We recorded their lap times then gave them a little break (we wouldn't want to spoil them!) before Nathan took the 450 out as Matt did his moto on the 250 two-stroke. After this The Moff did some extra laps on the 250F and we took a bunch of lap times to see what might happen if >>









he actually raced a 250F in the Red Bull Pro Nationals rather than his 250 two-stroke.

'What?' I hear you cry. 'The Moff rides a 250 two-stroke against MX2 bikes? Surely, that's not fair!'. But this is another dimension to the whole debate. Two-strokes are old-school and although KTM are producing up-to-date, lightweight and powerful two-stroke bikes, the four-bangers have been around for long enough now and development has come a long way from the dinosaurs that Joel Smets used to race. The latest thumpers are lighter, powerful, and responsive and are so nimble that even the freestyle radicals are pulling the most outrageous whips and tricks on them.

So what can we take as standard? Well the track is in good condition with nothing over stretching technically and both riders are of a similar ability and score good results consistently. They also know each other well so there is no awkwardness – just a little competitiveness as

you would expect from young racers. Their fitness levels are extremely good. Both riders regularly ride the 450F as well as Nathan the 250F and Matt the 250 two-stroke so therefore they can change bikes with ease. All three bikes are KTMs with the four-strokes being completely standard and the two-stroke using factory Kayaba suspension. It also has an aftermarket pipe on it.

The noticeable differences are that the 450F is heavier and more powerful than the 250F which has less power but is lighter in comparison and of course there is a difference in mass centralisation and inertia. The two-stroke is lighter still, has high brake horsepower in comparison with its power to weight ratio and of course the delivery of power is very different too.

So what can we predict from each bike? The 450F has a lot of torque and is going to drive out of the turns like a rocket but slowing it down will require some serious lever squeezing and

scrubbing jumps is less dramatic due to inertia of the engine.

The 250F is going to be easy to move around and choose lines on the track so you can keep your speed up. It will also require less braking so the riders can keep the flow going and of course scrubbing jumps on a 250F is what life is all about.

Similar to the 250F, the two-stroke is going to be easy to choose lines on because it's light. The lines used might be slightly different because of the power delivery and Matt will be looking for places that he can get his wheels to ride against so he can give it big licks on the throttle ASAP. Because the bike is so light and the motor quite big, scrubbing jumps comes somewhere between the 250F and 450 – in a two-stroke place all on its own.

It was amazing to see both riders during the first moto. Nathan's body language was like Neon as he dodged bullets in the Matrix and >>

*Maximum effort from  
Nathan on the 250F*







Moff and his 250 two-stroke top qualifying at Landrake



## RACE TIME!

### COULD WE LEARN ANYTHING EXTRA FROM THE FIRST ROUND OF THE RBPNS?

At the first round of the Red Bull Pro Nationals at Landrake Nathan and Matt went head to head in the MX2 class – Watson on the 250F and Moff on his two-smoker – which added another wee twist to this tale. Moffat topped MX2 qualifying with a time of 1:57.871 while Watson was fourth with a 1:58.210. What makes Matt's time particularly interesting is that he was way faster than riders who are normally much quicker than him when he races them 450 vs 450 in the MX1 division on a bike that we found much slower.

In moto one Moff once again held the advantage over Watson as they finished just seven seconds apart after 32 minutes of racing – seventh and eighth in class. Their fastest laps were .195 of a second different with Moff's being that fraction quicker.

In race two which was held the next day Watson held the advantage – ending up 16 seconds and two places ahead of Moffat. Their fastest lap times on this occasion were a bit further apart – Watson's best was almost 1.5 seconds better.

In the third and final moto which was held in slippery conditions they once again finished fairly close – this time Moffat was 18 seconds and two places ahead of Watson. Bizarrely, it was Lewis Trickett who separated them both times in the final two races. While the two-stroke pilot was consistently better over the course of the moto Watson managed to put in a fastest lap that was again almost 1.5 seconds ahead of Moffat.

Overall on the weekend – and in the RBPNS series standings – Moffat's now seventh with a total of 43 points while Watson's eighth on 42! What does this prove? Nowt, other than everyone has their own fastest speed possible for the conditions and it makes no difference what size your stead is. Or does it?







# CATCH UP!

A QUICK CHAT WITH NATHAN AND MATT...

Interviews by Sam Hobson

**DBR:** You guys seem to go a little under the radar at times so tell us how last season went for you?

**NW:** "It was my first year in pro ranks. I did the Red Bull and Maxxis riding for PAR Honda. In the Red Bull I did pretty good to be honest and I managed to get consistent rides in every weekend and I ended up fourth overall in the championship. In the Maxxis I never made the top five and my best overall was an eighth I think – not a bad first year really."

**MM:** "My year was going well in the Maxxis and Red Bull championships and I was sitting in a good position until I had a crash in Holland and damaged my groin and leg. I ended up having an operation in December which was far worse than anyone thought as it was such a little crash. I still won the two-stroke championship again and ended up 16th in the Maxxis although I didn't compete in the last few rounds."

**DBR:** What have you done to prepare for the 2013 season?

**NW:** "Just not stopped riding to be honest! You speak to some people who say they have a few weeks off from riding at the end of the season and have a break but we don't believe in that. We just keep riding and riding. I went to Holland for two weeks as the team

has a workshop out there. I also did a lot of beach races during winter too."

**MM:** "Following the operation I wasn't allowed to ride for six to eight weeks and so that dragged on until February. It was strange as normally I ride a lot at that time of year. I did a little testing then went straight to Spain for 12 days then Holland for a week and then straight to Preston Docks after that for the British Masters."

**DBR:** How did that go for you both?

**MM:** "It wasn't the best for me. I thought I was race ready and on a new bike as well. I crashed in both races and had serious arm pump so I was happy to get away. The following week was FatCat for the Maxxis and although I felt a bit unsure going in I qualified ninth. I finished up ninth in race one then had a DNF in race two. I did feel a lot better that weekend though."

**NW:** "I knew my speed was pretty good although to be honest I was riding a 450 all winter and I only got on the 250 about a week before Preston. I went into that weekend hoping to come out with a bit of money really so I was shocked when I qualified first and won the MX1 class. It felt easy and the bike was good so it was a good weekend. It was a shame I crashed in the

second MX2 race but there we go."

**DBR:** We're two rounds down in the Maxxis now – how are you feeling about that series?

**NW:** "The first round wasn't really a motocross race – the conditions were horrendous. It was just a case of get round, stay on two wheels and get the points. At Lyng I qualified second to Jake Nicholls which was really good. I went into the first race on a high and had a second in that race. The second moto I had a third behind Jake and Elliott Banks-Browne and I was running the same speed as them so I was happy with that. Then I had the podium in my sights and in the last one I was a little bit cautious and got stuck behind MacKenzie for a while and Bradshaw slipped by me on the last lap when I wasn't expecting it so ended up fifth in the last one but third overall so for me that was a good weekend."

**MM:** "I felt better at Lyng, I was riding good but I was let down by a couple of daft crashes with other people. I want to try and race in the top 10 and I have shown I can so I feel okay about my year so far. Okay, I'm 17th in the standings but it's really close in points so we will see how it pans out from here."





**Matt Moffat proves that two-strokes ain't dead yet!**

you could hear the rev-limiter smashing out the high notes when he was scrubbing the jumps and going for a little over kill at the end of some of the straights. Visually he looked immensely fast and controlled with it too.

The Moff meanwhile was quietly busting out his laps. You would hear the low bellow of the motor from time to time – mostly when Nathan had closed the throttle! Clearly you could see how much oomph the bike has out of the turns and Matt was jumping the bike long with whips rather than scrubs to keep the bike low in the air. Without the stopwatch you would think The Moff was only riding at 75 per cent effort compared to Nathans 100 per cent.

Even so their lap times were unbelievably close and almost the same lap to lap. The first two laps were their slowest, the next lap they both went a second quicker. Matt then went two seconds quicker compared to Nathans one second quicker. The next lap they both posted their fastest time of the moto at 1:30.9 and then it was back to 1:31s with Matt slowing off on the last lap. From the third lap in these two kept their times within two seconds with Nathan setting the fastest time of 1:30.9 twice! Not only were their lap times close together nearly every lap was less than a second apart!

The first moto was Ryan riding his regular steed – the 250F and Matt on Nathan's 450F. In moto two, Ryan is on his 450F MX1 GP point-scoring bike and Matt is on his own 250 two-stroke race bike – the same model of bike that he won the RBPN two-stroke series on last year and is racing again in the MX2 class this year.

During this moto both Nathan and Matt started to use some different lines compared to moto one although ended up moving back to the same lines used previously. Once again the guys got quicker throughout the moto and with two laps to go Nathan had closed the gap on Matt so we had a little race on our hands – to the point where Matt went one second quicker on the last lap and Nathan dropped two seconds because he was getting roosted!

Nathan clocked two fastest laps at 1:30.6 exactly and was just about running the same lap times as he was on the 250F. Matt on the other hand could only muster a fastest time of 1:32.2 on his two-stroker – over the course of the moto he hit three 1:34s, three 1:33s and three 1:32s.

It's great to see how these two riders can keep their lap times so close together and that Matt was actually slower on his normal racing weapon!

As we discussed the lap times after the second moto Matt removed Ben (Nathan's brother) from the 250F and busted out five laps. I recorded the last three and he was quicker on this bike than he was his two-stroke by a second a lap – and on a bike he isn't used to!

So which bike was fast to ride? Well the easiest thing to see is that the 250 two-stroke produced the slowest lap times on this day. The times between the 250F and the 450F are as good as identical with the Nathan setting the fastest time on the 450F by 0.3 seconds

So what's it going to take for an MX2 guy to beat the 450s again like Villopoto did back in 2007? In our test we've shown that a 250F is just as fast as a 450F on the same track with the same riders. So I guess it just comes down to beliefs.

Remember, there was a time when no one thought it was possible to break the four-minute mile in a running race. Roger Banister had a different belief and went under four minutes and then shortly after many more runners broke that barrier and now it is quite normal to do so. With that in mind it will be interesting to see what happens if an MX2 rider can cross the finish first in a mixed-capacity race either at home or abroad and then see the aftermath that follows...

## LAP ATTACK!

### NATHAN WATSON

250F	450
1:34.8	1:32.5
1:34.6	1:32.6
1:33.5	1:32.2
1:32.2	1:27.9 (cut course)
1:32.6	1:31.2
1:30.9	1:30.6
1:31.1	1:31.0
1:30.9	1:30.6
1:31.7	1:31.4
1:31.2	1:32.8
1:31.2	
1:31.7	

### MATT MOFFAT

250 2T	450
1:34.4	1:39.9
1:34.3	1:34.6
1:34.2	1:33.7
1:33.6	1:31.6
1:32.8	1:31.2
1:33.3	1:30.9
1:33.4	1:31.1
1:32.2	1:31.1
1:32.9	1:32.3
1:31.8	
1:32.6	
1:34.2	

**Nathan pops in a fast one on his 450**





# RED LEADER!

## KRISTIAN WHATLEY GETS OFF TO A FLYING START AS THE RED BULL PRO NATIONALS KICK OFF IN CORNWALL...

Words and photos by **Sutty**

**W**ith a brand-new format that spreads the racing over both days of the 'motocross family festivals' the 2013 Red Bull Pro Nationals kick off at Landrake in glorious sunshine, under cloudy skies and during a rain storm. WTF? Yep, the three championship motos are held in very different conditions as Saturday afternoon's blue skies and sunshine is replaced by something a whole lot more miserable on Sunday – ah well.

The event's certainly no Cornish nasty though as a decent sized crowd rock up to what's perennially a perfectly presented circuit to witness some ace racing – albeit from a distance. Inside the spectator areas there's also all the usual RBPN goodness for the fans to enjoy too – although Fireman Sam's apparently out on a call and Ben 10's here instead.

While the new format is a winner with spectators what do the riders think? "I think it's pretty cool," says Dyer & Butler KTM's Jamie Law. "It's a really chilled out weekend of racing but everything's still really professional. It's a bit of a ball ache having to travel down on the Friday and in reality each one of these will now take up three days – it's a good job I've got an understanding boss. That aside, I'm loving the new format."

And that's something series promoter Matt Bates is only too pleased to hear. "It's incredible to see so many pro class teams making such a huge effort in

increasing their presence," he says. "It started to become apparent towards the end of the 2012 season that teams, riders and personnel were all here on the Saturday so I thought let's see them race, so after consulting with team managers and riders we came up with a schedule that worked for us all. The Elite Youth Cup aren't short changed of races, the pro riders get to earn more money and the spectators get to see the top guys race on a Saturday... everyone wins!"

But do they?

"Naturally the prospect of more time on my bike and an extra chance to earn some prize money is a plus so the addition of a pro race on Saturday for me as a rider is a good thing but economically I think it's pretty tough for most, if not everyone," reckons Bryan MacKenzie.

"As a team we have a BW85 rider who has to be there for Saturday anyway so it's always been in our schedule for us all to be there on the Friday. But I can see how it could be difficult for some people with time off work and things because realistically all the pro class guys have to be there on the Friday to be set up for Saturday. It's also a lot of extra wear and tear on the bike and at the level at which we run our 250F it pretty much means extra expense on maintenance which can be difficult to fund – especially towards the end of the season.

"I see what they're trying to do and achieve with having pros there on Saturday – to encourage more people to support the racing on Saturday and stay overnight to make a weekend of it – and I salute e22 for trying to pioneer new stuff but how







*Kristian Whatley sets the  
pace at Landrake*





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TMX DIRTBIKE



exciting was it? We don't do much in practice, qualifying can't be overly exciting to watch either and the race is pretty late in the afternoon, so by then it's already been a long day.

"I'm on the fence with the whole thing. Being selfish then for me it's a good thing but being sympathetic to my bike, mechanic and team then I'm not so sure. The question I just asked myself was would I mind if it was to go back to the single day format?" I answered 'nope'."

As a team rider who stays at the track one thing Bryan's not considered is the extra cost of accommodation for some riders and team staff. And while the overall prize fund has increased to cover that – just under £10,000 for the year according to a recent press release – it's not gone up by anywhere near the 50 per cent worth of extra racing each Pro National round now enjoys...



Reigning MX2 champion Neville Bradshaw has a steady start to the season



Wild card Milko Potisek makes the long trip over from France worthwhile

## SERIES STANDINGS

### MX1

1	Kristian Whatley	72
2	Milko Potisek	67
3	Nico Aubin	56
4	Gert Krestinov	52
5	Brad Anderson	52

### MX2

1	Steven Lenoir	72
2	Graeme Irwin	62
3	Neville Bradshaw	56
4	Lewis Trickett	49
5	Lewis Tombs	44



Lewis Trickett is awesome in the opening heat

The series' opening moto is run under bright blue skies on Saturday afternoon and is dominated by MBO Sport Yamaha's Kristian Whatley who's regularly running lap times that are three seconds faster than anyone else. By the end of the 25 minute plus two lap moto Whatley's well clear of guest Frenchman Milko Potisek and Brad Anderson who comes home third just ahead of defending MX1 champ Nico Aubin. Making it three Frenchmen in the top five is MX2 class winner Steven Lenoir who edges out Stephen Sword and Lewis Trickett to the flag after an awesome race long battle on their 250Fs in amongst the MX1 class bikes.

Conditions are a little damper and cooler for race two the next day but there's still no stopping Whatley who takes his time and makes the most of a midrace Nico Aubin mistake. Aubin still hangs on for second while Potisek's third. Graeme Irwin wins MX2 by placing fourth overall – eight positions ahead of class runner-up Lenoir – while Josh Waterman who made his pro class debut at Landrake in 2009 finishes a fine

fifth in what must be one of his strongest rides ever.

It tips it down for the third and final encounter and after Whatley crashes on lap one it's all about Potisek who tiptoes his way around the now stupidly slick Cornish track to take victory. Whatley remounts for second while MX3 world championship leader Bert Krestinov takes third on the Apico Ansatec Kawasaki. In MX2 it's Lenoir who edges out Irwin for top spot while Bryan MacKenzie clings on to third in the cold downpour.

Overall it's Whatley who takes the MX1 honours ahead of wild card Potisek and Aubin while Lenoir takes MX2 gold ahead of Irwin and Bradshaw.

Round two down on the soft beach sand of Weston-super-Mare should make for another exciting weekend of racing on **May 18/19** and with more sideshows, demos and Pro Nats goodness than ever before should be well worth the trip – heck, you might even win yourself a free Commencal BMX...



# PROX

## RACING PARTS



Monster Energy Pro Circuit Kawasaki Team



**T**he dark mystery of changing tyres – probably one of the few jobs where your hands can end up cleaner than when you started – is a job that scares just about everyone because regardless of how many we change any of us can still nip a tube. Even the experts!

When a puncture hits us or a tyre needs changing the key is easy – it's down to soap to make the tyre slip around and slide down those levers. Just remember your main enemies are cold weather, levers with any sharp edges and lack of lubrication. A warm

tyre will be more flexible to handle, washing up liquid makes for great lubrication, tyre fitting paste is better or even WD40 if you need to get resourceful.

Our top tip is Bib-Mousse gel on the inner walls of the tyre which has shown to be one of the greatest savers of compression pinches from a product designed for something else. Some people take over an hour to change a tyre and it's okay to take your time – just avoid pinching the inner tube between the rim and the tyre. Oh, and remember lubrication is key to success.



**07** If you have Bib-Mousse gel then lubricate the inner sidewalls of the new tyre only reaching as far as the tread pattern and around the bead of the tyre. This allows the tyre to slide on the rim and the tyre to slide down the levers when re-fitting.

**08** If you don't have gel, dilute some washing up liquid 50:50 and wipe it around the tyre bead inside and out with a rag.

## TYRETRICKS!

**CHANGING TYRES IS A JOB MOST HATE BUT DR DIRT LOVES FITTING RUBBER – IT'S ALL ABOUT USING PLENTY OF LUBE**

Words by **ROBIN BAYMAN** photos by **ANDREW WALCH**





**01** Deflate the tube and then slacken off the valve nut and security bolt knocking both into the tyre. This will allow you to break the bead all the way around the tyre. Remember that some rear wheels have two security bolts.



**02** Remove the wheel spacers then lay the wheel on its side with a rag or cushion below the hub. Break the bead on the tyre with your own weight. It's best done disc side up first but remember that both sides have to be broken.



**03** With the wheel disc side up, push a couple of levers into the rim just a few inches apart and fold the first lever back. Although it's considered a bad habit the disc is useful for trapping a lever underneath to help get you started. Beware it doesn't come free and give you a face full of lever!



**04** Make your way around the tyre, levering one side of the tyre completely free from the rim. When the tyre is off all the way around carefully tug the tube free from the tyre.



**05** With the tube removed – and starting away from the security bolt – the tyre can be pulled away from the rim. It's a bit strenuous and so sometimes needs starting with a lever.



**06** With the tyre removed clear any dry dirt from the rim with a wire brush. Doing this makes it a lot easier to fit the new tyre and helps the tyre to seat better.



**09** With the security bolt as slack as possible place the wheel disc side inwards into the tyre starting at the security bolt. Wrestle the wheel inwards as far as you can with your hands then use tyre levers to flip the tyre on to the rim completely.



**10** Now position the valve by the hole in the rim and manipulate the tube into position using any method possible to get the valve poking through the rim. New tubes benefit from a little inflation to remove creases from the tube – just two or three pumps will do.



**11** With the tube in position use levers, starting six inches from the security bolt, fold the tyre into position being sure not to trap the valve. Once on, over inflate the tube making sure the tyre fits central to the bead before dropping to the desired pressure.



# TEST SQUAD!

WAKKER, WARNER AND MT GRIP IT AND RIP IT — IT BEING THE DBR TEST FLEET...

WORDS BY GEOFF WALKER AND ROB WARNER PHOTOS BY NUNO LARANJEIRA

**T**he mighty Berg has had a good run this month with some competitive action under its cool blue wheels. On the modification side of things I felt it needed an extra five mm of preload over the five mm I added last month. This brought the balance of the bike into a perfect place at test HQ.

Myself, Fast Tony, Tommy Crunch, JK and Aga Doo had a great day of riding and testing on the enduro loop at the Marsh and the only downer was Tommy Crunch eating shit while trying to wheelie a two foot 'rut gap' — consequently tearing his own 'rut gap'...

After sessions at the Marsh the motor oil was dropped and the simple task of changing the Motorex 10/60 was undertaken. The oil coming out was in great shape and running in is now well and truly over for the Berg. One more riding session with the Ride55 crew in glorious Cornwall was all the Husaberg was going to get before its first competitive outing and everything was set apart from ordering new Metzeler rubber and giving the beauty a bath.

I was looking forward to getting to the first two rounds of the British Sprint Enduro Championships for a cruise around Chavenage Farm in Gloucestershire and in true Wakka/DBR stylee I didn't get to prep things quite as well as I had hoped due to a few technical issues on the home front. Turning up

to any race with a grubby ride is not good but thankfully I had team members Fast Tony and our technical genius G Man on hand to help unload and sort numbers etc in the 10 minutes I had before the sighting lap...

Arriving on site a few minutes before any form of enduro is not good but that's just how this one rolled. The bike was a dream out on the superb track and as the two days wore on (and Saturday's concussion cleared) I got into the spirit of things. Racing the Vets class is great craic and with a great bunch of guys out there including Carl Tiley and Andrew Reeves using their experience it was fantastic fun and a great test for man and machine.

The only changes I made to the bike over the two days were to soften both front and rear units when the pace was a little slower on the frozen ground in the morning laps. The bike is very, very fast in the open going and after a couple of laps on the second day I managed to remember a few of the single track sections through the trees... The Berg's solid handling in the woods was evident as the grip level got better but I needed a few better lines on the early laps when things were a little more technical and slippery — gotta walk the track next time!

The Berg has asked me to prep it with new tyres etc for the next round so we will see what I can work out because new boots ain't cheap...

The awesome KTM 450 has been around DBR test HQ for a while now used first by Tommy Crunch and now Martyn 'MT' Tucker. With 40 hours on the clock this beauty is running sweet and with the only technical issue being a couple of upside down moments on a certain beach making the big fo-fiddy breathe oil instead of air.

After an initial test just before racing began and very limited ride time it is taking MT a while to get into the change of colour from last year's long hauler. To be fair the bike is set super stiff at the moment so this is not the best package for the south west style of racing. We will be easing up the settings in the Fox Shox units ASAP and making a test before MT beats himself up even more.

As well as the Fox Shox equipment MT has invested in a taller seat from our pals at AMS motorcycles. The seating position is now perfect for the big fella and he is nailing holeshots like they are going out of fashion but unfortunately the slightly over valved nature of the suspension is wearing our man out earlier than it should

There is absolutely no doubts about the amount of power this beast is putting out there to be used and we are also going to look into slightly softening the delivery through a bit of a mapping change. We will aim to deliver a good run of smooth power from the bottom and instead of the bike running stronger and >>



## HUSABERG FE450

RIDING HOURS: NINE

**Maintenance:** Fork modification, motor oil and filter change, general check over.



*We prefer a Johnnie  
Walker on the rocks  
but whatever...*







## ISO2 NUTRITION

### OCT-X PERFORMANCE SPORTS DRINK

The hard working crew at ISO2 Nutrition have been working to produce an all-round electrolyte and tunnel vision focus drink for a while which can be used in pretty much every cardio workout sport on the planet. The team have come up with Oct-X Performance Sports Drink. The initial tests are showing great flavour in the 'Tootie Fruity' variety and during every riding session everyone who has tried the product has noticed a positive increase in performance. The good thing about the product is the fact it is light enough to drink before and during exercise to keep you grippin' n' rippin' longer.

**Price:** £35.99

**Supplier:** [iso2nutrition.co.uk](http://iso2nutrition.co.uk)

**Contact:** 01793 745822

stronger from mid to top we will aim to get it to tail off slightly. In effect we want to 'de-tune' the motor slightly to make an already great bike in the hands of someone like Tommy Crunch deliver the goods in the hands of Martinez.

Enough from me so it's over to Rob Warner for an update on our RM-Z 250...

"When DBR HQ said I'd be getting a Suzuki 250F to test I have to say I couldn't get in the van and down to Marshfield fast enough. Having until recently owned a RM-Z 450 I know how good these bikes are, and I can't lie, I love Japanese motocross bikes.

"The new black rear end is definitely Marmite – you either love it or hate it – and personally I really like it, that and the red seat cover top complimenting the yellow perfectly. That said I know there's lots that would disagree.

"The riding gear was on in record time with less than an hour spent bench racing with big Geoffrey before I was out on the bone dry Marshfield track. The first thing I noticed was just how much power this 250F motor delivers compared to some I have ridden in the past.

"Delivery is smooth off the bottom and if you need it to pick up in the rev range then a quick flick of the impressively light clutch lever fires the motor up and the mid is strong before the bike revs on and on and just keeps pulling. The thing I really noticed is how long you can leave the little Suzi' in a gear before it hits the rev limiter. In fact around a 'square edged' Marshfield the only time it hit the limiter was when I was in the wrong gear, too tired to change up and the back end would skip.

"I think that's the thing that impressed me the most after that initial outing is the fact that you don't need to be on the rev limiter because there is just so much mid to top power you simply don't need to be revving the sh\*t out of the bike...

"Being quite tall it's always a big factor to me just how 'roomy' the rider compartment is. I feel huge on a 250F Honda for instance – banging my knees on the bars – but this felt bigger and comfortable which is good because I hate being cramped on a bike. The stock bars are a pretty low bend and I'll certainly swap them for something taller before I next ride along with that standard elastic chain. Surely it wouldn't kill the manufacturers to put something just half decent on from new?

"Something that Suzuki's have always – and rightly so – had a bad rap for are their gearboxes. I really felt that was the one thing that let my 450 down, the fact that you really needed to take your time changing gear or risk hitting a neutral but thankfully they've addressed it. The 2013's have a redesigned box and it feels perfect – you can shift quick and confidently, it's taken them a while and this year we'll keep an eye on it but it feels great and as it should be.

"On the flipside Suzukis have a very justified reputation for good handling and turning but it didn't feel as good as I thought it could. The rear end is awesome – it wants some clicks perhaps to speed up the rebound but the spring was strong enough for me to have the correct sag – but I don't like the forks as they are.

"Thankfully Suzuki haven't gone for the air forks yet as Showa are still developing them – as they should be judging by the amount of new Hondas I see riding around looking like their start devices are engaged... The new 48mm Showa SFF forks felt harsh to me in the initial part of the stroke which in turn didn't help with front end grip or with them sat up in the stroke like that the turning either. To be fair I think I have a 'hanging out the back of her' riding style as I needed to go down a spring rate on my 450 when all the reviews of that bike said go harder."



## SUZUKI RM-Z 250

RIDING HOURS: UNSURE EXACTLY

**Maintenance:** General check over, motor oil and filter change.



dbr tested

Martyn Tucker lays some rubber at DBR test HQ



## KTM 450 SX-F

RIDING HOURS: 40

**Maintenance:** General check over, new air and oil filters. Motor oil change. New Pirelli MT32 tyres.



Geoff tries to rattle some fillings loose down on Morecambe prom-diddly-om!



## COMMENCAL META AM 3 MOUNTAIN BIKE

Dual suspension 'All Mountain' bikes are the coolest and most exciting training tool for dirt bike riders on this planet. Used by loads of pro riders to inject fun and skills into their everyday training these 'enduro' style bikes are made to cover every type of terrain whether it is uphill, flat or downhill.

We have a couple of bikes on test at the moment. One is the Commencal Meta AM 3 complete bike and one is the SR75 team built Nukeproof Mega. The Mega has been used for a couple of years now while the Commencal arrived in March. These dream machines are invaluable when it comes to training and with new 'trail centres' popping up all over the country providing great places to go and ride/train with your pals on hand built trails it is time to get out there and improve your cardio and bike handling skills.

The Commencal Meta 3 has been a consistent winner at races such as the Megavalanche in the French Alps and as such it doesn't really need much proof of its toughness and readiness to tackle any UK trails. The Meta 3 is a great descender and the angles, top tube length and bottom bracket height make for a great, low centre of gravity to chuck the bike around.

The beauty of this bike is the ability for the bikes angles and design to work for pedalling up the hills as well as smashing the DH parts of the trails. The Commencal Meta 3, in stock trim has a very confidence inspiring head angle without taking too much away from its pedal-ability. This is no carbon cross country race machine but as far as giving you an all over work out this bike rocks.

We will continue to use both the Commencal and Nukeproof bikes this year and keep you updated with any upgrades to the machines before we tackle the mighty Megavalanche race in July. Good times...

**Price:** from £2549.99

**Supplier:** decade-europe.com

**Contact:** 01792 469811







# COACH TRIP!

## WHY YOU SHOULD REALLY GO SEE A TRAINER IF YOU WANNA GO FASTER...

WORDS BY EOLD DRABLEY

**T**he human brain is processing 2.4 million bits of information through our five senses (sight, sound, touch, taste and smell) each and second although you can only process 134 bits consciously! Another way of describing it is that we can process seven chunks of information, give or take two chunks, so, at best you can only take in a maximum of nine chunks of information at any one time.

"Err yeah Ed, that's great but what are you on about?" I hear you murmur. This article is about training schools, developing and learning new techniques. The topic isn't about what techniques to use where and in what situation – it's about the purpose of learning and practice skills.

In a nutshell, there are two reasons why someone seeks training or coaching and that is either they've done something in the past and they don't want it to happen again or they haven't yet achieved something that they want in the future. Staying on your bike, being safer, wanting to ride your bike faster, the satisfaction of carrying out a certain skill, winning and having even more fun are general reasons why riders look for coaching.

The thing I love about our sport is that it is so dynamic – there are so many variables. Just riding the bike on its own requires the whole body carrying out different functions simultaneously and orderly. Your right foot works the rear brake, left foot is shifting gears, your hands are working the clutch, throttle and front brake and you have to move your body around the bike in a certain way, at certain times and certain conditions. You perform certain skills in order, for example, you brake for a corner and then accelerate around the turn... and that's just riding the bike!

Then you've got the track – the ground changes, the lines you are using change and the conditions change. Then you've got your competition – where are you going faster so you can make a pass, which part of the race do you make your

passes, protecting your lines so the guys behind you can't get passed and are you in the position that you want to be in? You've also got your physical condition – can you maintain your pace? And your bike's performance. Is it good, can it be better? There are just some many things going on at any one time!

Let's go back to the seven chunks of information. If you are a beginner and doing your first race it is very easy to get overloaded, processing information. How does the start system work? Where do I sit on the bike? Which gear do I start in? How many revs? I can see my mates cheering me. I can't hear my engine revving. You are processing all this type of information and your brain is feeling a little fried even before the gate drops and when the gate does drop, you dump the clutch expecting to tear off and you realize that after consciously thinking about all the other things, you forgot to put the bike in gear!

As you get in to the race it's head down and you're doing your best to get a great result. You are thinking about the riders around you and the battles you are having and as the race comes to a close your body is feeling fatigued so you have to dig deep and use all your will to finish the race with as much speed as you can. Now this bit about racing applies to everyone! When you are dealing with the racing and physical elements of a race, when do you think about your technique? When you are so engrossed in racing do you ever think about your body position?

So what techniques do you use when you are racing? The answer is the habits that you have learnt, that have become an unconscious skill. If you are using ineffective technique and skills then you'll have limitations on your speed and fitness. The purpose of training and coaching is to develop a technique that gives you control of your machine in all situations.

You are searching for a balance with your bike so that you can ride in a way that the bike does the work for

you, no fighting, just easy movements that work with the bike and improve your speed. You are after efficiency so that your moments are timed with the bike and when you do this, huge amounts of energy will be saved so when you are battling or knackered you can rely on the unconscious skill that you are using – the fast, efficient one described above.

As you learn new techniques you have to consciously think about what skill you are doing and over time and continuous focus on a certain skill, there will be a point where you no longer think about this certain skill. It becomes an unconscious habit.

It's like when you were learning to drive a car. Changing from first to second gear was easy because it was a straight move from first down to second. Changing to third was a completely different situation, as you had to look down at the gear lever so you could put it in to third and not fifth – or first! A few more times driving and you've got used to it and now you have no need to look down at the gear stick to change. It has become an unconscious habit. This is the reason why I say 'Practice makes perfect, so long as you practice perfectly'. If you keep practicing a bad habit it becomes more of an unconscious response.

If you want to learn on your own, choose one thing at a time and stick at it even if it feels slow to begin with. If you want to deal with a number of things then go to a coach. If you want to speed the whole process up all together, then watch a pro do the skill perfectly and study the moves or strategy. Then visualize in your mind the same pro, doing the same skill perfectly five or six times – or more if you like.

Now, watch yourself successfully carry out the same skill, continuously (if you make a mistake, rewind the film and start again!). After you have done this, go inside your goggles and visualize yourself actually using the new skill you've just watched yourself doing for another five or six times. Use this process and you'll be riding like a pro in no time!





# BABY BLUES!

THE YOUNGSTER IN THE FLEET – THE YZ85 – IS FINALLY  
FINISHED AND LOOKIN' GOOD DRESSED IN BLUE...

Words by **Robin Bayman** Photos by **Andrew Walch**



*If you had x-ray eyes  
would you really be  
looking at dirt bikes?*



**O**ur focus this month has been dedicated towards the baby of the fleet – the two-stroke YZ85. The YZ frame was returned from the powder coaters we wrote about last month looking like new. In addition, the motor has had its guts ripped out and sorted with replacement parts, along with some cosmetic enhancing and engineering work throughout. A little later we will look at the economy of getting a small bike to race-dependable condition but first we had to get a bit petrol-headed.

Whilst piecing the bike together we found another issue to resolve – the radiator had clearly been in the wars, leaving it rather twisted.

We didn't want to throw more money at the bike but we did want it somewhat close to its original form so we took the risk. With the base of the radiator clamped in the vice and knocking sticks and lumps of wood on hand, our arses were clenched tight enough to crack walnuts.

As we pulled the radiator back to resemble its original shape, we watched for those dreaded fracture marks to appear, when the only option would be to get the tig set out. Strangely, the radiator survived and now fits a treat – as can be seen in our x-ray image. Thank heaven the YZ85 only has one radiator – I didn't think our good fortune would stretch to repeating the barbaric procedure on the other side. The ultimate

success was confirmed when we pressurised the cooling system up with a test rig and it held pressure. Andrew was keen to promote professional skill but I put it down to a stroke of good luck – we've suffered enough failures to back up my opinion.

Many two-stroke owners will have read about the magnificent science of a two-stroke pipe when we showed off the work of art for PS3. However, those readers may not have realised that this is relevant to all two-strokes. Market-leading British pipe makers DEP head my list when it comes to buying off-the-shelf two-stroke pipes.

Back in the '90s – as DBR test fleet head >>



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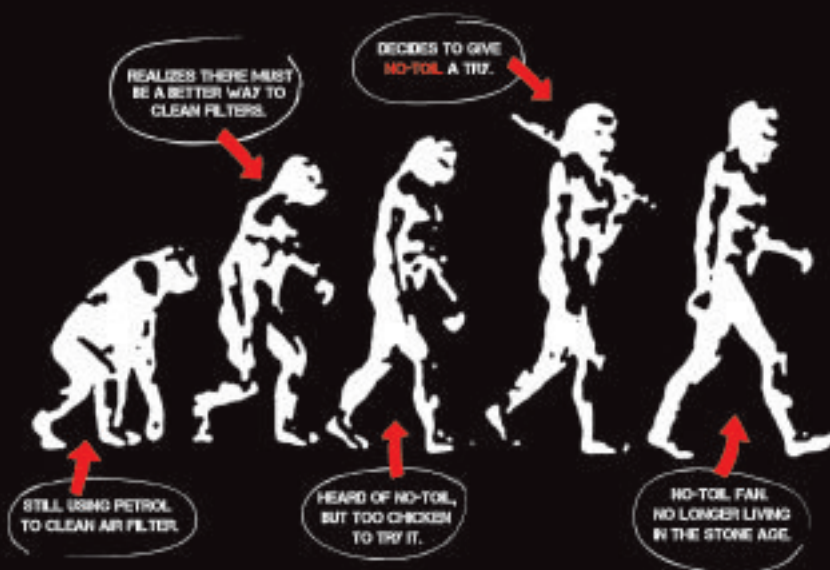
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honcho – I conducted a multi-manufacturer pipe shootout featuring European and US pipes fitted to the fleet that was made up of a Yamaha, Honda, Kawasaki and Suzuki machines. On the same bikes and the same day, with nothing changed other than the pipes, the British DEP and the Dutch Doma out-performed their US rivals in all of the tests we conducted and left a few red faces along the way, for those who thought the Southern Californian brands had the market conquered.

I guess the folks at CI Sport were not surprised when I made my approach to them about a pipe for the YZ. I knew the pipe would look good, fit well and work plus have the benefit of being readily available at a reasonable price. Basically if I wrote about it, I tested it thoroughly, as I have never written false reports to please suppliers. I stated that DEP made brilliant pipes back then and still believe it now.

The standard YZ pipe looked in reasonable condition at first glance although some numb nuts has used a 30mm bolt where a 10mm bolt was required to anchor the pipe to the bike and pierced the pipe right where it can't be patched without removing and re-welding the mounting bracket. The effect would be that the whole way the pipe works would be interrupted, as the bolt – in addition to collapsing part of the pipe – would also plug between 10 and 20 per cent of the pipe's bore. Thinking about it, perhaps just calling them numb nuts was being too considerate towards the complete tosser's feelings!

Sensitivity issues aside, I guess the debate returns to the original concept of RPM and now comes down to the economics of recovering a bike of the YZ's value. Taking into consideration that the YZ has not been updated much – other than in colour – since 2002, it is, pessimistically, 10 years out of date. Optimistically, it could be viewed as very current, other than having a blue rear-end and black seat, as opposed to the more

recent blue seat and white rear fender. Incidentally, the frames are also black on the current models.

A new 2013 YZ85 will cost you £3500 and second-hand race-ready YZ85s start in the £900 region, with entry level for the field bike version typically around £400. That was the cost of our bike. The gaps between prices depend so much on condition and the competitiveness of the market, although to buy a used, clean bike in reasonable race condition, you should budget for £1500. Our additional parts to elevate the condition of the project bike have run to £1400 which, added to the original £400 cost of the bike means an outlay of £1800 (excluding any charge for man hours). This is slightly up on what we could have bought a fair condition, competitive race bike for, but the result is a race ready, newly shod and fantastic bike.

Some parts and services were essential, like the piston and rod, bars and levers but perhaps we could have saved on repairing the output shaft and exhaust system. Others were simply just improvements like suspension service, new plastics, tyres, chain and sprockets and frame coating.

We feel the project bike matches the visual and reliability value of a six month old YZ85 of any year in its present condition. The question is if our bike is now worth £3000 or just £900? Make your own mind up on its value – it's 11 years old, yet absolutely up to date and looks rather pretty. I think smart money to budget for a used YZ85, in good general condition, is £1250 as your kid will outgrow it in just a year or two. However, if it's a bit tatty, you will immediately put a pair of new Michelins on, a new pipe, chains and sprockets, bars, plastics and graphics and there's your £1,800.

The benefit we have is that we know the RPM YZ85 is fully serviced and nothing should go wrong. The verdict is that if you can afford

to buy good condition, you probably should as no financial savings are made by buying a wreck and recovering it to full glory!

Over the next couple of months, the same concluding appraisal will be conducted on the KXF, which has had just about anything and everything done to it and the KTM 450 which has had the absolute minimum spent on it, to recover them both to race-ready bikes.

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- Polisport plastics
- Prox piston
- Race FX gear shifter
- Renthal bars, grips, chain, sprockets, disc pads
- Samco hoses
- Throttle tube
- UFO chain runner and shock guard
- Yamaha gearbox output shaft



# RV'S RUN!

## WE TRACK RYAN VILLOPOTO AS HE CHASES DOWN HIS THIRD STRAIGHT AMA SUPERCROSS TITLE...

Words and photos by **Steve Cox**



here are many reasons why it's rare for a racer to win any given championship three times in a row – especially considering the level of competition currently in the 450SX class at the AMA supercross series. But perhaps the biggest reason it's so rare is that it's actually pretty rare for a racer to stay healthy enough to win three championships in a row. Motocross and supercross are very tough sports and the supercross schedule is comprised of 17 rounds run in 18 weekends. It leaves no time for healing.

Regardless, it's an elite group of racers that Ryan Villopoto just joined in clinching his third title in a row. The only other racers who have done it are Bob Hannah, Ricky Carmichael and Jeremy McGrath the latter of whom actually won four in a row (1993-1996) and then three in a row (1998-2000).

Unlike years past Villopoto's path to the title in 2013 was pretty bumpy. It started out terribly but in the end Villopoto was once again the better man. It wasn't perfect but it was successful. Here's how RV landed his third consecutive supercross championship...

### ROUND ONE — ANAHEIM 1

For the past two seasons Ryan Villopoto has started out at Anaheim 1 by making a huge statement. But at Anaheim 1 in 2013 something was off all weekend. Villopoto was second fastest in daytime qualifying behind James Stewart but when it came to the race his starts were terrible. He started outside the top 10 in his heat race and outside the top 15 in the main event.

It took him until lap seven to catch up to ninth (because of a fall on lap five) at which point he got caught up behind Stewart (also suffering not only from a terrible start but from a knee injury suffered during the second practice session). While trying to pass Stewart, Villopoto went down again after landing on a Tuff Block. He toughed it out to finish a lap down – back in 16th place. Meanwhile Davi Millsaps battled it out with Trey Canard to take the win and the points lead. Villopoto started out the season in a pretty deep hole – 20 points behind the pace setter.

**Race Winner:** Davi Millsaps

**Series Leader:** Davi Millsaps

"The main event did not go well at all. I did not get the start I needed which forced me to find alternate lines in order to pass guys. The track was not easy to pass on so you had to take some risks. After the crash I knew I just had to get as many points as I could and survive. There are still 16 more rounds so I'm now focused on Phoenix and finishing where I should be."

### ROUND TWO — PHOENIX

Although Villopoto's starts improved in Phoenix they still weren't stellar. His big problem wasn't starts though – instead it continued to be crashes. He started just outside the top five in the main event and then fell on the second lap. He started working his way forward right away while Honda team-mates Justin Barcia and Trey Canard tried to run away out front. Villopoto eventually caught Canard but couldn't find a way by. Luckily for Villopoto, Canard went down on the last lap in the same place that Villopoto went down in the beginning of the main event handing him second place. It wasn't a win but it was a lot better than 16th.

**Race Winner:** Justin Barcia

**Series Leader:** Davi Millsaps

"Tonight was a lot better than Anaheim. I wasn't too happy with my heat race but the main was a step in the right direction. It still wasn't quite what I wanted but the potential is there. We're continuing to work on the bike during the week and working to adapt to the different conditions each week. If we can stay on the box every weekend we should be in good shape."

### ROUND THREE — ANAHEIM 2

If Villopoto could start the season over using Anaheim 2 as if it were Anaheim 1 he definitely would. The dirt is the same – and the track is similar – but the results are entirely different as Villopoto starts pretty terribly (again) but works his way forward quickly going from eighth off the start to second by lap five. He then passes Canard for the lead a lap later and takes off with his first win of the season. Three races and three winners but Villopoto was finding his stride.

**Race Winner:** Ryan Villopoto

**Series Leader:** Davi Millsaps

"I'm happy to get this win out of the way. We made progress each weekend and felt really good coming into today. My starts were much better which made it much easier. I just took my time, was patient, and made clean passes. Every win is good but this one is nice to get the ball rolling for the rest of the season."

### ROUND FOUR — OAKLAND

Finally, a complete race for Villopoto in Oakland... He started poorly out of the gate but stuck to the inside around the first turn and grabbed the lead. He was helped out some by a huge pileup behind him going into the second turn where Canard, Chad Reed, Stewart and Barcia all went down. Once out front Villopoto took off with his second win of the year. He was the first racer to win two main events on the season and it helped him out a lot in the points as he trailed points leader Millsaps by only eight points.

**Race Winner:** Ryan Villopoto

**Series Leader:** Davi Millsaps

>>



*RV lights up the candles  
with yet another race win*





"The points race is what we are going after and winning the holeshot gives you a great advantage. It was a difficult balance for me tonight. The track was very challenging and it was easy to fall into a groove where you go a little slower. I built a big lead early so without being pushed from behind I had to concentrate on going fast and getting the lap times I needed. We made some changes to the bike today that I think really helped us out there tonight so hats off to my team. It is a long season and we are going to keep plugging away."

## ROUND FIVE — ANAHEIM 3

The 'bad start monster' reared its ugly head yet again at Anaheim 3 for Villopoto. Former amateur rival and holeshot master Mike Alessi led early but gave way to Dungey on the second lap. Villopoto started about 15th then got caught up in a second-turn crash that gathered up much of the field. He came out of that in 11th but much farther behind the leaders than he was before the crash. Then he got caught up with the fallen Alessi, going down a second time on lap two. He came around in 18th place before working his way forward to eighth. Meanwhile, Dungey took his first win of the year in front of Millsaps which meant Villopoto lost a ton of ground in the championship chase yet again. Anaheim was not kind to Villopoto as he trailed Millsaps by 17 points heading to San Diego.

**Race Winner:** Ryan Dungey

**Series Leader:** Davi Millsaps

"Tonight was a frustrating result. We felt really good all day and in the main event I got about a fourth place start but that all went away when a rider came and took us all high in the next berm. The track was really tough to pass on but we were able to salvage some good points."

## ROUND SIX — SAN DIEGO

If Villopoto thought Millsaps was tough just because of his consistency he reminded him that he's capable of winning too in San Diego. Millsaps got the holeshot over Chad Reed while Villopoto started mid-pack. Reed pressured Millsaps for a while before falling about midway through the main. Villopoto caught up as far as fourth and was chasing down Dungey for third when he went down so ended up finishing sixth — just behind Reed while Millsaps won.

**Race Winner:** Davi Millsaps

**Series Leader:** Davi Millsaps

"It seems like every time we get something going we give it away again. It was difficult to pass guys out there and once I got behind early I had to work hard to get around them. The track was very one-lined so you had to pick your spots to get make passes. And Millsaps is just killing it right now."

## ROUND SEVEN — DALLAS

Villopoto didn't have a stellar heat race but in the main event he got out of the gate first and grabbed the holeshot and pulled out a small lead although Millsaps never let him get too far away after getting by Reed for second on lap four. Dungey chased Reed down eventually as well but Villopoto took his third win of the season. It didn't do him a whole lot of good though as his two chief championship rivals — Millsaps and Dungey — finished second and third. He still sat 24 points behind Millsaps.

**Race Winner:** Ryan Villopoto

**Series Leader:** Davi Millsaps

"I put a lot of pressure on myself to win. I felt good all day. We weren't the fastest but when the main event came along I made it count. We're still very much in the championship and it's just going to take consistency."

## ROUND EIGHT — ATLANTA

As the first guy to get three wins on the season things were looking up for Villopoto but he was going to need some help from Millsaps to find any comfort in the championship chase. And Millsaps didn't want to cooperate. In Atlanta James Stewart grabbed the main event holeshot over Villopoto. Villopoto stayed close to Stewart but couldn't do anything with the former champ. Stewart took the win while Millsaps again finished right behind Villopoto in third. Villopoto still had 22 points to make up at the halfway point in the championship.

**Race Winner:** James Stewart

**Series Leader:** Davi Millsaps

"The track was really slippery out there tonight. I felt good all day. My goal is to get another championship so I wanted to make sure we got a good finish tonight. All year the tracks have been slippery and we haven't been able to push as much as I'd like to during the race."

## ROUND NINE — ST. LOUIS

Villopoto had new triple clamps on his KX450F in St. Louis and he was immediately faster and more aggressive in practice but controversy surrounded round nine. Stewart grabbed the early lead while Villopoto had to work his way around a few guys but the race was red-flagged for Kyle Chisholm on lap four setting up a single file restart. Because Villopoto passed Alessi under the red-cross flags (which is a big no-no) he was docked on the restart from third to fifth. He started working his way forward again until he caught Stewart at the halfway point. Then, under another red-cross flag, Villopoto passed Stewart to take the lead. Stewart was miffed as to why that was allowed but it stuck and Villopoto took the win. Upon further review Villopoto was given a warning but his race win was upheld. This combined with a lackluster sixth-place by Millsaps made a huge change in the championship as the series headed to Daytona.

**Race Winner:** Ryan Villopoto

**Series Leader:** Davi Millsaps

"It was a crazy race. When the red cross flag came out I made a costly mistake of jumping the double and as we lined up for the restart they docked me three positions. I knew I needed to make something happen and when I saw the leaders were right there, I knew it was on and it was going to get gnarly. I started pressuring the leader and we went back and forth before I was able to make a clean pass and get away."









## ROUND 10 — DAYTONA

Known more as an outdoor guy Villopoto excels at Daytona. In the main event he started near the front then worked his way by Barcia and holeshot artist Ken Roczen who was riding perhaps too hard for his own good. Roczen eventually faded to seventh. After Villopoto took the lead he flat out took off to score his fifth win of the season. But more importantly, Millsaps had a fall on the first lap and struggled on his way to 10th. The points lead now belonged to Villopoto.

**Race Winner:** Ryan Villopoto

**Series Leader:** Ryan Villopoto

"I've always loved Daytona and she was good to me tonight. I have the points lead now so that's good — we finally climbed out of the hole. Now we just have to stay out front. Sometimes, that's even harder. With the way Davi has ridden this year we have to keep our game up. That's for sure."

## ROUND 11 — INDIANAPOLIS

In Indianapolis Villopoto got to run the red plate for the first time since Anaheim 1 and he wanted to make it count. Again the dirt was pretty good and again Villopoto had to deal with a very game Stewart and Millsaps. Stewart grabbed the start with Millsaps on his tail but Villopoto went to work on Millsaps right away. On lap six, Villopoto had caught Stewart but needed a Stewart mistake to get by for the lead. He got that a lap later, when Stewart inadvertently stabbed his rear brake in an off-camber turn, stalling his RM-Z450 and falling over. Villopoto barely missed him as he went down and that allowed Dungey (who had just passed Millsaps) to get on his tail. Dungey gave Villopoto fits for the rest of the race but couldn't get by. Villopoto took his sixth win of the season and Stewart got by Millsaps on the final lap to secure third after Millsaps fell over in a turn. Millsaps got fourth.

**Race Winner:** Ryan Villopoto

**Series Leader:** Ryan Villopoto

"James Stewart was riding great tonight. Lucas Oil Stadium has been great to me — it's an amazing stadium and I love coming here. Ryan Dungey was able to make up some time on me here and there but I just kept pushing hard until the end."

## ROUND 12 — TORONTO

Toronto always has terrible dirt — it's too soft and sometimes frozen. This year it was better than before but still among the softest dirt on the schedule. Millsaps grabbed the holeshot ahead of Reed while Villopoto had to fight his way around Reed in the opening laps. It took Villopoto more than half the race to make a pass stick on Millsaps and he did it aggressively in a flat turn after the finish line. He maintained the lead to the finish to extend his points lead and take his fourth consecutive win.

**Race Winner:** Ryan Villopoto

**Series Leader:** Ryan Villopoto

"Tonight was some tight racing. Everyone is running such a high pace that there is no room for error. I got a great jump and was able to be there from the beginning and just had to wait for my time to make a move. It's nice to head into the break with a little cushion."

## ROUND 13 - HOUSTON

Villopoto started second behind Alessi but made a pass right away for the lead. Canard assumed second place after missing a couple of rounds due to injury but he was passed by Dungey and Stewart before long. Stewart went down while trying to get by Dungey for second and scored a DNF while Villopoto cruised to his fifth win in a row and his eighth of the year.

**Race Winner:** Ryan Villopoto

**Series Leader:** Ryan Villopoto

"Getting five in a row is incredible. We've come a long way since Anaheim and have constantly improved to the point where we are now on top. The field is so close that you really need to have everything dialed in order to win and we've been able to do that these past few weeks."

## ROUND 14 — MINNEAPOLIS

Dungey had been giving Villopoto fits and had shown lots of speed in previous weeks but couldn't quite put things together. But Minneapolis was Dungey's hometown race and although Villopoto got the start Dungey was on him right away. Every time he got close to Villopoto in the main event the crowd went nuts and the more defensively Villopoto rode, the easier it made it for Dungey to stay on his tale. With four laps to go Dungey made a pass stick and pulled away to take the win. The win moved Dungey into second place in the series standings past Millsaps who was third in the main.

**Race Winner:** Ryan Dungey

**Series Leader:** Ryan Villopoto

"I was riding well and Ryan Dungey was also on top of his game and we had a good battle out there. The track was tricky and I didn't want to be too aggressive because we have three races left and the title is still on the line."

## ROUND 15 — SEATTLE

It was time for Villopoto's hometown race in Seattle but he didn't have anything for Justin Barcia. Barcia grabbed the holeshot and although Villopoto found himself in second place right away he couldn't catch the Honda racer. Villopoto finished second — just in front of Millsaps — and extended his points lead to 25 with two races left to run.

**Race Winner:** Justin Barcia

**Series Leader:** Ryan Villopoto

"I didn't get the start I wanted so to come out the way I did and salvage that was awesome. I rode 20 solid laps but Justin Barcia was on it and I just really couldn't do anything with him."

## ROUND 16 — SALT LAKE CITY

Salt Lake City can be crazy because the weather is unpredictable. Kevin Windham won a race there a couple years ago in the snow. With erratic weather comes erratic results. However, Salt Lake City was beautiful this year and just another race. Villopoto grabbed the start in the main event and knew he had to beat Millsaps and Dungey to clinch the title a round early. And who was right on his tail? Millsaps and Dungey. They pressured Villopoto all 20 laps in one of the most suspense-filled races (without any passes for the lead) of the season but Villopoto managed to hang on to secure his ninth win of the season and clinch the championship with one round left to run. Millsaps finished second and sits second in the standings going into the series finale in Las Vegas.

**Race Winner:** Ryan Villopoto

**Series Leader:** Ryan Villopoto

"It wasn't just a race — it was a close race for the entire 20. I could feel him the whole time and one little mistake he would have been right there on me to force a pass. The track was tough and any little mistake could have easily changed the result. We are all pushing so hard it was anyone's race."





*With no glove and a bleeding finger Villopoto proved just how much he wanted to win this title by toughing it out to finish 16th back at Anaheim 1*





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# EUROFIGHTERS!

OFTEN OVERLOOKED IN FAVOUR OF THE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP THE EUROPEAN ENDURO CHAMPIONSHIP IS RAPIDLY GAINING POPULARITY AS THE HOME FOR THE MIDDLEMEN — AND WOMEN — OF ENDURO...

Words and photos by Future 7 Media



For many the lure of international competition is a tempting one — the want, for some the need, to travel abroad and experience what's on offer in mainland Europe. New countries, unfamiliar

terrain and different riders make racing abroad an exciting proposition. But for most thoughts of joining the world's elite on the Enduro World Championship trail are a step too far — the level of competition is simply too high...

Luckily, there's a middle ground — a place between national level racing and the EWC. Filling that void is the lesser-known European Enduro Championship. The EEC is the platform for all the middlemen of enduro to compete. From the semi-pros to the young guns to the seasoned veterans that have been there and done it all the EEC offers a class for everyone to compete — and at an affordable price too.

Starting in Italy on the last weekend of April the short four-round series takes in France and the Czech Republic before concluding with a three-day finale in Portugal in late October. Venues are within acceptable range of Britain ensuring travelling costs are kept to a minimum. And with many commuting via a van and

caravan, most camp out and make a weekend of it. With competitors coming from all over Europe the atmosphere inside the paddock is relaxed, friendly and easygoing.

For 2013 seven British riders signed up to the season opener in Bussi sul Tirino, Italy. Ranging from those making their debut appearance on the international stage to former EWC riders the Brits acquitted themselves impressively with all placing inside the points.

Making his long awaited return to EEC competition KTM's Tom Sagar ensured Britain's presence was most definitely felt at the sharp end of the competition as he took two impressive wins in the Senior E2 class as well as also topping the overall classification on day two.

With a seventh on day one, Honda's Jamie Lewis moved up to third overall on day two in Senior E2 while Lee Edmondson carded a 14-12 result in Senior E1. In the Junior ranks, Jack Rowland (Husqvarna) ended his weekend with a 4-4 result in the Junior E1 class while teammate Rob Johnson also secured two top 10 results with an 8-9 scorecard.

In only his first time competing abroad, TM's Josh Gotts held his nerve ending his weekend 14-10 in the Junior Under-20 class. Fellow EEC rookie Rhian George claimed a fantastic eighth position in the Women's class... >>



*Tom Sagar's just one of the Brits competing in the EEC this season*







2012

# MX WORLD CHAMPIONS

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# TOM SAGAR

AGE: 27 BIKE: KTM 450 EXC

CLASS: SENIOR E2 RESULT: 1-1

**DBR:** Why did you decide to compete in the EEC?

**TS:** "When I last rode the EEC in 2006 it was one of the most enjoyable championships I have ever done so that was one of my main reasons for coming back. Even though I feel like I would be competitive in the EWC, it's not possible for me to commit part-time to the full series. The EEC is only four rounds so it's a lot easier to fit it in around working full-time. And the standard is high too – guys I raced against in the EWC are riding this championship so it makes for good racing."

**DBR:** How does it compare to the EWC?

**TS:** "Obviously it's a step down from the EWC but in terms of competition it's just what I need. I can come here with just a van and a bike and figure highly in the results. It's almost impossible to do that in the EWC no matter how good you are. And I think that's why the EEC series is becoming so popular."

**DBR:** One thing that's clear is that there is great camaraderie amongst the British riders, everyone pitches in to help all the riders out...

**TS:** "Yeah, that's the thing which makes it so enjoyable – we all work as a team. At home everyone is rushed – you arrive later, do your race and then go home. Here we spend the best part of a week together. Between travelling to the event, walking tests, eating together, the whole experience has been a good team building exercise and a lot of fun."

**DBR:** You and some of the other more experienced British riders get to spend time with the younger riders. What advice have you been able to offer?

**TS:** "It's been nice to work with riders like Josh, Rhian and Rob Johnson. When we walk the tests I just try to point them in the right direction regards line choices and what to look out for. I'm happy just to help anyway I can. I've been in their position before so it's nice to offer some advice."

**DBR:** Overall, are you pleased with your results?

**TS:** "Truthfully it's gone better than I expected. Winning both days of my class was always on the agenda but in the overall classification you just never know how it will pan out. You can never write off an Italian in these sorts of conditions – especially in their own backyard. So to match their pace and even beat them on day two was something I didn't honestly expect to do."

Rhian George toughs  
it out to eighth in  
class on day one

# RHIAN GEORGE

AGE: 19 BIKE: HUSABERG TE 125

CLASS: WOMAN RESULT: 8-DNF

**DBR:** Why did you decide to compete in the EEC?

**RG:** "I wanted to see how I ranked against some of the best girls in Europe while also getting the chance to race abroad."

**DBR:** What are your first impressions of the championship?

**RG:** "It's been an amazing experience. Probably better than I expected it to be. The girls are much faster than what they are at home and racing against them brings you on as a rider. Normally at home the times aren't close but here 10 seconds could mean the difference between five places so you have to try hard all the time."

**DBR:** What's it been like racing against people of different nationalities?

**RG:** "I'm surprised how welcoming they all are. Most of them spoke some level of English so we've been chatting and having a laugh between checks. I thought I might have been more isolated than what I was."

**DBR:** Were you pleased with how you rode?

**RG:** "Obviously I'm gutted to have crashed on day two and not finished but I feel I made up for that on day one. On the last lap I was in 10th place but I managed to put in a really good time on the final enduro test and ended the day in eighth. For my first time racing abroad I'm really proud of that result and I'll already be looking forward to coming back to round two in France. I've got a much better idea of what to expect now."





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# JACK ROWLAND

AGE: 20 BIKE: HUSQVARNA TE 250

CLASS: JUNIOR E1 RESULT: 4-4

**DBR:** Why did you decide to compete in the EEC?

**JR:** "Racing in the EEC is about gaining more and more international experience. Racing in places like Italy, France and the Czech Republic is completely different than racing at home week in, week out. Coming to these races teaches you how to race on terrain you don't experience back home while competing against riders that know exactly how to ride it. It's a massive learning experience for me."

**DBR:** Do you view it as a stepping-stone to the EWC?

**JR:** "Ultimately I'd love to try my hand at the EWC. But first I need the experience and there's no better place to do it than here. Racing here helps put you into the spotlight and I hope my results will help me to earn a place in the EWC."

**DBR:** With some regular EWC riders also competing in the EEC does that give you something to aim for?

**JR:** "Yes, racing against guys that also race the world championship gives me something to base my on speed on. At the moment some of them are a little faster than me so I'm trying hard to bridge that gap to them."

**DBR:** What goals have you set yourself for this season?

**JR:** "I want to be a European champion. That's my main objective this year – I want to win the Junior E1 class. I believe I'm fast enough to do that but it's going to be hard. I knew Italy would be the toughest race of the season. The Italians are so fast on the hard packed, rocky terrain whereas it took me a while to get dialled into it."

Jack Rowland runs the #1 plate...



# LEE EDMONDSON

AGE: 26 BIKE: HM HONDA 250F

CLASS: SENIOR E1 RESULTS: 14-12

**DBR:** Why did you decide to compete in the EEC?

**LE:** "I just wanted to try something different. It's been about six years since I last competed in the EEC and back then I rode the Junior class. At home the events are great but they become repetitive. The tracks are the same year in, year out. Competing abroad offers something fresh and with both the ACU and the Welsh Sports Council helping me with costs now was the ideal time to give it a go."

**DBR:** How has the championship changed from when you last raced in it back in 2006?

**LE:** "The standard of competition has grown. There's definitely a deeper pool of talented riders entered in the series. For an ordinary rider, competing in the EWC isn't feasible. You need a big team behind you to be competitive whereas at the EEC you can arrive with a bike in a van and just race. A lot of guys that raced full time in the EWC have moved back to the EEC and it's made the classes much stronger."

**DBR:** How did your weekend go? Were you pleased with your results?

**LE:** "It's been a bit up and down to be honest. I just wasn't on the pace early enough on day one and struggled a little. We don't see terrain like this too often back home so it takes time to adapt. The enduro test was typically Italian – long, fast rocky and lots of single track across a mountain. I started to settle into it on the last lap on day one but then got hit with a one-minute noise penalty."

"Unfortunately, I was only told about it at the end of the day so I wasn't able to fix it and the result stood. However, I just pushed the edge a little too much on the final enduro test and paid the price. It was one of the biggest crashes I ever had and I bashed my arm pretty good. That was all it took to drop from seventh to 12th."

Lee Edmondson scores points both days





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Rob Johnson is a regular  
face on the MPS team

# THE JOURNEYMAN!

## TWO TICKS WITH MICK...

As MPS Racing team owner Mick Seward is one of the journeymen of the enduro paddock. A firm believer in harnessing young enduro talent and offering them an opportunity to compete on the international stage, Seward has religiously contested either the EEC or the EWC since 2004. But with rising costs and tightening budgets, Seward has focused his attention towards the EEC for the last couple of seasons, along with both the BEC and BSEC...

"I love travelling abroad with my riders to compete," says Mick. "Even though Husqvarna UK doesn't expect us to do so I personally want to give my guys an opportunity to prove themselves abroad. I focus on the EEC because it is the most affordable to do."

"Value for money wise we get a lot out of the EEC. For a start, all the rounds are in Europe and easily accessible. With the EWC moving to places like South America it's no longer possible for me to commit to that championship. As much as I would like to, it doesn't make any sense only riding half a series."

"In the EEC there's some bloody good racing and top quality events. The organisers always put on a well-organised race with hard standing paddocks and good facilities. The atmosphere is great and while the racing is important there's also a fun social side to it as well."

"Personally, I just want my riders to do the best they can. I don't ask for any more than that. In Jack, I know he's got the potential to win and I believe we can help him do it. It was disappointing to see him try so hard here in Italy yet miss out on the podium by less than one second."

"The level of competition is high – maybe even higher than it was last year – but we'll continue to do our best. In the past we've won European championships with Daryl Bolter and Simon Wakely and it would be brilliant to do the same with Jack."



Mick Seward gets to work

# JOSH GOTTS

AGE: 19 BIKE: TM 125

CLASS: JUNIOR UNDER 20 RESULTS: 13-10

**DBR:** Why did you decide to compete in the EEC?

**JG:** "After focusing on the BEC and the BSEC in 2012 I felt that this year I needed a little more if I wanted to improve. The ACU gave me some funding to help with my racing costs so I decided that the best thing to do was compete in the EEC and gain some international experience."

**DBR:** How have you found your first taste of racing abroad?

**JG:** "It's been a massive eye opener for me. With it being my first time racing abroad I didn't really know what to expect. On the racing side of things it feels like a normal BEC event but the organisation is on a much bigger scale."

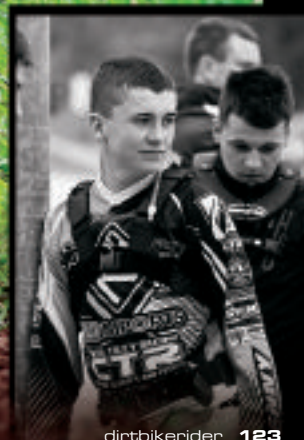
**DBR:** What goals did you set yourself?

**JG:** "I wanted to finish inside the top 15 – I felt like that was a realistic target to set. I was a bit nervous before the start of day one but once I left the starting ramp I quickly settled into it. It was a bit strange to ride on the other side of the road and the trail was much different than back home. On day one I finished 13th in the Junior Under-20 class but felt I could do better. I attacked the tests much harder on day two and gradually improved my times to end the day in 10th."

**DBR:** Overall what can you take away from the experience for the next round of the championship?

**JG:** "What I've enjoyed the most is getting to spend time with riders like Tom Sagar, Jamie Lewis and Lee Edmondson. They've a lot of experience and being able to walk tests and see what lines they've been using has been a massive help. That doesn't normally happen at home so I think that's what I've learned the most from."

It's Josh Gotts first time  
racing overseas





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**H**e won the BSMA Best of British Auto Championship in 2009, the Weston beach race on a 65 in 2010 and in 2012 he was the British Supercross champ. In between Harry Kimber has always been there or thereabouts in the National championships.

The story of 2013 so far has been one of highs, lows and then more highs. Two good second place results the opening rounds of the Arenacross series were followed by a collarbone injury, then on his return to outdoor action a bragging rights win as a wild-card runner at FatCat's GT Cup round.

After that victory Harry was looking forward to racing the opener of the main series this year – the EYC at Landrake – with the outcome being a fourth overall finish with one race win. Here's what Harry thinks about his year so far...

**Rage:** Fill us in on some of the missing details about 2013 so far and your hopes for the year ahead?

**HK:** "Well so far it definitely hasn't gone to plan. I changed machinery at the beginning of the year and because of the poor weather I hadn't even practised a start before the opening round of Arenacross. Then after two of rounds of Arenacross I raced at the Dutch supercross. My starts were really good and I felt in tune with the bike but in the last race I had a small crash and broke my collarbone. That meant I was out for another few weeks and playing catch up.

"Testing my speed for the first time outdoors with championship rivals I was more than pleased with my four race wins at FatCat in the GT Cup. For the rest of the season I have set myself a goal of winning races and getting on the podium at every event."

**Rage:** Which series will we see you in this year?

**HK:** The Red Bull Elite Youth Cup is the main challenge this year and I'm also in the British Youth Nationals and then at the end of the year I'll be doing Arenacross again."

**Rage:** Are you planning to race any of the Euro events on a Big Wheel next year?

**HK:** "Yes, next year I hope to race the UEM championship and possibly the Dutch ONK series."

**Rage:** You are well known for excelling on hardpacked big jumpy circuits but is there anything you think you need to improve on?

**HK:** "I know I need to improve on my sand riding skills as this is what has ruined my championship hopes for the last couple of years. This is why I was extra pleased with my performance at FatCat."

**Rage:** What would you say your six favourite hardpack circuits are?

**HK:** "Whitby, Rocketworld, Foxhill, Cusses Gorse, Cingoli in Italy and Tonymoto."

**Rage:** Do you use a pro trainer or have a regular training schedule?

**HK:** "I don't have a pro trainer at the moment but I go boxing training twice a week and I try to ride my MX bike on a Wednesday. I should explain my school knows all about my MX and give me the time off to practise. Some of my teachers even ask regularly how I get on."

**Rage:** Looking back which have been your favourite moments on track? And what's the biggest disappointment?

**HK:** "My top outdoor performance has to be the Red Bull Elite Youth Cup at Landrake in 2011 on the 65cc. I won four races and the overall. Indoors my best was the first round of the British Supercross at Sheffield on a 65cc in 2011. I got first beating Alexander Brown with Jed Etchells third. I have to say breaking my collarbone and missing the final two rounds of this year's Arenacross was my lowest low as I really look forward to racing indoors."

**Rage:** Any final comments Harry, or anyone you'd like to thank?

**HK:** "I really want to thank my mum and dad because they have been brilliant. Also I would like to thank all my sponsors – Chris Rose, Jeff Goss and anyone else that has helped me with my racing now and in the past. Thanks everyone."





Red Bull PRO RENTALS

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Gary Ashley grips it and rips it in Cornwall

# CORNISH CREAM!

**JAMES, JAY, TOM AND GARY RISE TO THE TOP AT LUSCIOUS LANDRAKE...**

**W**ith the opening round at luscious Landrake and with round two down on the beach at wonderful Weston has there ever been a more diverse, exciting and adventurous start to a youth championship? I think not.

Looking ahead to Weston and in the 65s Finley Rossi Beard will be aiming to get his championship back on track after bailing out early down in Cornwall. RB123 won the opening moto but running a high temperature and feeling sick he missed out on heats two and four. Gary Ashley and Jack Carpenter with a winning brace each were the 65cc high fliers and with Ashley backing up best he nabbed top step on the box. Carpenter ran second overall with Kasey Hird in a solid third. Lewis Hall, Tyler Rowe and Ike Carter rounded out a highly competitive top six.

In the Smallies another pre event favourite Alexander Brown also had to call it a day early after riding day one with a badly swollen ankle. By claiming first blood speedy Charlie Cole sprang the first major surprise of the new term. And just to prove it was no fluke he went on to record 3-1-9-2 for second overall on the weekend – but equal top on points with Tom Grimshaw.

Powerband flier Grimshaw claimed it was 'lucky Landrake' yet again for him but there was absolutely no denying his terrific Sunday show with both heat wins. Harry Kimber was the other

heat winner and he claimed fourth overall. Two points in front of Kimber, Jed Etchells nailed down third overall with a performance that included three second place returns. Christopher Mills and Callum Green took fifth and sixth overall respectively.

Without doubt the outstanding performance of the weekend belonged to ISL KTM runner Jay Hague as he controlled the Big Wheel section from start to finish. With five fastest lap times and five conclusive race wins, the RMJ Academy trained pilot sits out front with a healthy points lead.

Landrake usually favours the Honda crew but this year only Mitchell Lewis on the MX World machine made it pay. Lewis running 2-2-3-2-2 took a well deserved section silver. Taylor Hammal proved to be the best of the new upgrades and with a sparkling day two show – going 3-4 – he helped himself to third overall.

In a tight three way scrap Jordan Eccles claimed fourth with a best of second in heat three. Next came Albie Wilkie finishing best with third in heat one. Joe Jefferies ended up sixth man on the podium – Joe saving his best until last running third in the day two closer. Elsewhere in the division a cracking day one show from Keenan Hird kicking off with a 4-3 promises much for future rounds. Tommy Schofield, Brett Pocock and George Grigg-Pettitt also caught the eye.

In the Rookies Dan Thornhill turned up with a new ride and KTM mounted he duly ran second in qualification with James Harrison on top and Rob Davidson in third. In racing trim the form book also ran true as Harrison on the Lanes machine won it overall with two heat victories to his name. Thornhill nailed down three heat wins and had it not been for a rear wheel puncture in heat four he would have claimed the top step.

Rob Davidson on the MJW Kick greenie ran third overall after improving on day two with a brace of seconds. This following a full blooded day one effort dealing with a bike he couldn't effectively get off the line. In fourth overall Tom Neal won the battle to be best of the rest – followed by newbie Josh Gilbert in a very creditable fifth with Oli Osmaston in sixth overall. Matthew Callaghan put in a couple of decent rides going second and fifth but an inconsistent set leaves him in championship 10th.

## SERIES STANDINGS!

### 65

1 Gary Ashley 210, 2 Jack Carpenter 206, 3 Kasey Hird 196, 4 Lewis Hall 184, 5 Tyler Rowe 178

### 85SW

1 Tom Grimshaw 203, 2 Charlie Cole 203, 3 Jed Etchells 188, 4 Harry Kimber 186, 5 Christopher Mills 182

### 85BW

1 Jay Hague 225, 2 Mitchell Lewis 207, 3 Taylor Hammal 179, 4 Jordan Eccles 175, 5 Albie Wilkie 172

### ROOKIES

1 James Harrison 213, 2 Dan Thornhill 211, 3 Rob Davidson 197, 4 Tom Neal 179, 5 Josh Gilbert 161







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Jordan riding in his beloved sand at FatCat

## SPOTLIGHT ON... **JORDAN ECCLES #33**

**DOB: 20/6/98 HOMETOWN: PONTEFRAC T SPONSORS: LTA LINGE TRAINING ACADEMY, RIP N' ROLL, AIROH, GAERNE, POWERBAND RACING, KENDALLS CYCLES, DUCK SMART, MUM AND DAD**

"I've had some very good results at the Nationals in the past but little injuries and some inconsistency have taken me out. Hopefully though I'm now back swinging injury free and this year I can get the job done," said Jordan Eccles following a towering display at the opening round of the GT Cup FatCat where he carded four blistering wins with only a machine failure robbed him of a fifth. Regardless, Jordan ended the weekend fourth overall.

He was also fourth overall in at Landrake's EYC round. The Cornish show saw Jordan top the qualifying session but the racing was a weekend of mixed fortunes highlighted by a second place return third time around. Some room for improvement then. Here's what JE #33 had to say for himself.

**Rage:** Following the Arenacross injury there's now a whole new team backing you – how's all this working out?

**JE:** "With Powerband Racing and Gary at LTA Training I feel very comfortable with a brand new

sorted set up. I missed a lot of winter training waiting for the pot to come off and I have had to work harder recently to get my fitness up to where it needs to be. It feels right just now but it can always be better."

**Rage:** I hear that you had to change all of your original racing plans for 2013 – why was this?

**JE:** "We originally signed up to do the Dutch ONK series, the European 85cc championships and the Elite Youth Cup. But following the regulations and rules of the Europeans and ONK the age limit has dropped this year which unfortunately means we cannot take part in them now. We are now concentrating on the EYC and doing whichever European meetings are now possible. I'm really gutted that they changed the rules, I was hoping to go out there with my parents, trainer Gary and do well against the European boys."

**Rage:** Sand or hardpack? And favourite aching circuits – how does it all stack up for you Jordan?

**JE:** "Being from up north I prefer sand, mainly because there is a lot more sand tracks local to me. I do like to ride hard pack but have been brought up riding sand. My favourite all time track has either got to be Hawkstone Park or Desertmartin. I also really like Landrake, Whitby, FatCat Motoparc and also really enjoy riding Duns because of all the jumps and ruts. I tend to just race them as they come, you can't choose what tracks you want to ride so you just have to deal with it. Bottom line is I prefer sand and we are working on the hardpack stuff."

**Rage:** You comes from a motocross family – is that what influenced you to get into the sport in the first place?

**JE:** "It's so cool to have a full family that do motocross. Me, Peter and Micky have all been brought up to ride motocross and it's all I know. If I didn't ride motocross then who knows what I'd be doing – probably slacking around. I love motocross, the training in winter, the feeling of winning races!"

**Rage:** At the start of this interview you mentioned good results – which one has been the best and what has been the lowest point?

**JE:** "I'd say winning my first National – the opening round at FatCat in 2011 on the Small Wheel 85 was the highest point – and I finished series runner-up. It was such an amazing feeling to stand on top of the podium and it felt awesome. The lowest point of my career has to be being injured, it sucks. I've learnt a valuable lesson from being injured recently but without saying too much, I think it's working."

**Rage:** What does motocross mean to you as far as family, school and friends go?

**JE:** "Basically all my school friends know that I do motocross. My school gives me licence to go out of school to ride which I'm very thankful for. They always ask how I've been doing or how it went which is really cool. I don't think any of them know actually how tough and brutal motocross is. If one of my younger brothers decided to ride I would say to them it's all or nothing. If you want to race and compete then train hard because if you don't want to train then what's the point in riding. My little brother Jack has always wanted to get a motocross bike but it's been difficult to fit in with travelling to all the nationals."

**Rage:** Who do you need to thank?

**JE:** "I'd like to give a big thanks shout to all my sponsors and everyone who has helped me through the tough times – Lta Linge training academy, Rip n' Roll, Gaerne, Airoh, Powerband Racing, Kendall cycles, Duck Smart, mum and dad and all my family and friends. Thank you."











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We test David Knight's full-on EWC race bike in next month's issue as well as the full range of 2014 KTMs. And in the second instalment of our brand-new myth busters feature we ask is red riding kit slimming?

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